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THE SECESSION MOVEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA

By
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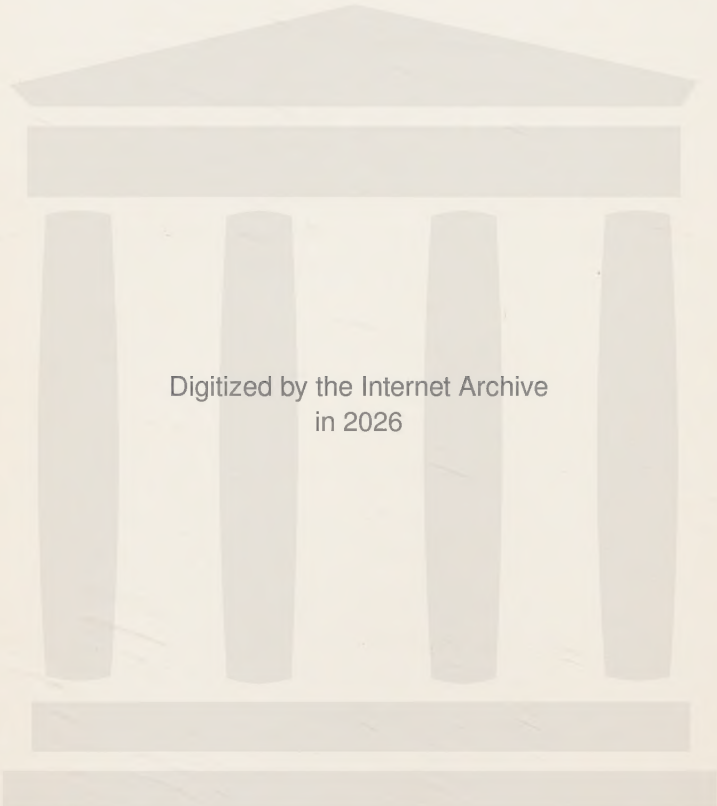
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PREFACE

Four years ago Dr. A. R. Newsome suggested to me that the secession movement in North Carolina might prove a fruitful subject for investigation. The fact that many important source collections used in the preparation of this work were not available to earlier writers on North Carolina history was an important consideration in my decision to undertake the study. Although aware that various aspects of the subject had already been amply treated, I concluded that a complete study of the secession movement in North Carolina would perhaps be of some usefulness to those interested in the history of North Carolina and in the secession of the Southern states.

My interest in Southern history was to a large extent inspired by the stimulating teaching of Professors R. D. W. Connor, F. M. Green, J. G. deR. Hamilton, and W. W. Pierson. In the preparation of this monograph I have had the good fortune of friendly assistance at every hand. Professor A. R. Newsome of the University of North Carolina directed the study and furnished many valuable criticisms which have been incorporated in the finished product. Professors F. M. Green and H. T. Lefler read the entire work and gave me the benefit of their suggestions. Professor H. K. Beale read Chapter VI and made several helpful criticisms. My friend and colleague, J. L. Godfrey, read the manuscript and made suggestions as to style. To all of the above, I freely acknowledge a genuine indebtedness. Finally, the staffs of the North Carolina Historical Commission, the North Carolina State Library, Duke University Library, and the University of North Carolina Library were most helpful in the collection of material.

Joseph Carlyle Sitterson.

Chapel Hill, N. C.
November 1, 1938.

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THE SECESSION MOVEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA

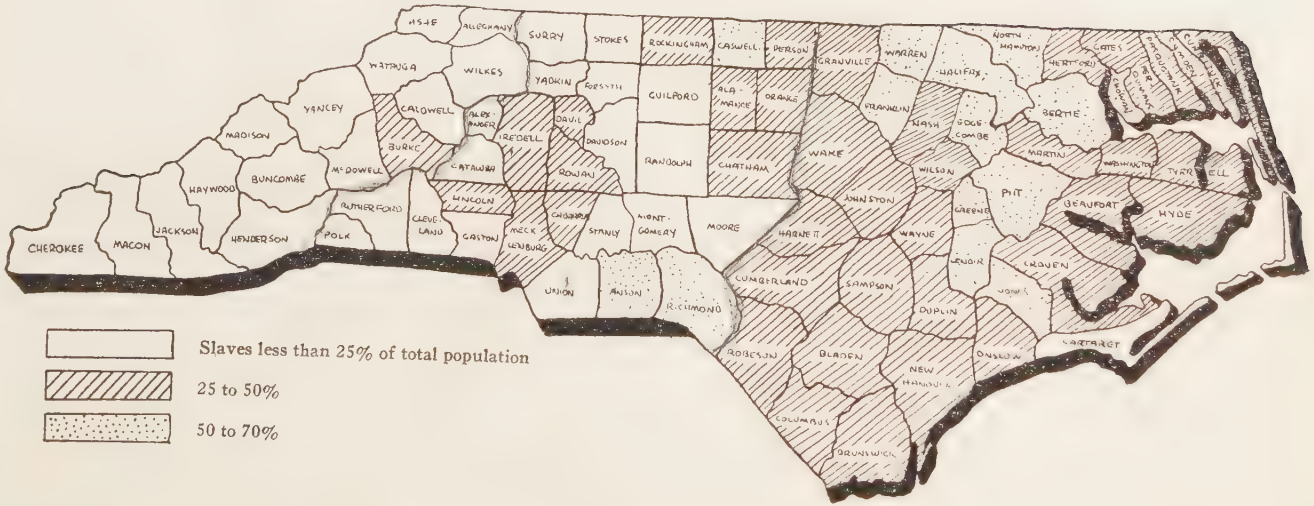
CHAPTER I

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECTIONALISM IN ANTE-BELLUM NORTH CAROLINA

The secession movement in North Carolina was characterized by certain features which give it more than local significance. Within the state were found both the forces which impelled the South to leave the Union and those which resisted until secession became an accomplished fact. The presence of many influential individuals and groups intensely opposed to secession provides an excellent opportunity to study and appraise the principal forces which were indifferent or hostile to the movement for a Southern confederacy. On the other hand, the existence of a body of opinion sincerely convinced of the desirability of a Southern confederacy makes it possible to estimate the positive forces striving for Southern nationalism. North Carolina contains most of the geographic features found in the South. Consequently, its ante-bellum civilization was in many respects a composite of the various elements in Southern life. In the East, there was a plantation-slavery regime similar to that of the lower South, with its extremes of large planters and "poor whites." In the piedmont, there was a diversified economy of small farms, manufacturing enterprises, and occasional plantations. In the mountains, there was the relatively self-sufficient frontier economy common to the Appalachian region throughout the South.

A thorough study of the secession movement in North Carolina requires an analysis of the socio-economic sectionalism of the state. Particular social and economic conditions provided the setting in which the Southern Rights movement was born and furnished much of the food upon which it was nurtured. Likewise, social and economic conditions furnished the basis for opposition to states' rights and secession opinion.

MAP I. DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVES IN 1860



Though possessing a sea-front of nearly three hundred miles, North Carolina was denied by nature the advantages which produce an extensive ocean commerce. Its shallow sounds are separated from the ocean by a chain of narrow sand banks, broken here and there by narrow inlets. Shifting sands, however, have made these inlets suitable only for small vessels, with the result that the mouth of the Cape Fear has been the state's only important harbor.[1]

The rivers of North Carolina form an imperfect system of water transportation. Those which flow through Virginia and South Carolina accentuated the geographic sectionalism of the state and hindered its economic unity. Farmers along the banks of these rivers sought markets outside the state for their products. In the northeast, the Roanoke which empties into Albemarle Sound was navigable for about one hundred miles from its mouth. Much of the trade of the section watered by this river was with Norfolk, which, because of its size and port facilities, was a good market. The Tar River, rising near the Virginia line, widens near the coast and is called the Pamlico. Farmers in the tobacco and wheat region on its upper branches in Franklin, Granville, Warren, and Halifax counties carried their crops overland to Virginia.[2] The Neuse, likewise rising near the Virginia line, was navigable for about one hundred miles from its mouth and served as a means for the transportation of products to New Bern.

The Cape Fear River was navigable as far inland as Fayetteville. Since its mouth formed the best harbor in the state it became the principal channel of inland water transportation. The Yadkin and the Catawba, rising in the Appalachian region, turn southward and flow into South Carolina. It was natural

[1] J. S. Bassett, "The Influence of Coast Line and Rivers on North Carolina," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association,* 1908, I, 58-61; P. B. Barringer, "Influence of Peculiar Conditions in the Early History of North Carolina," *Publications of the North Carolina Historical Commission,* Bulletin No. 23, pp. 13-25.

[2] The close economic association of this section with Virginia was recently illustrated by the explanation of a Warren County farmer as to why he did not market his eggs in Raleigh. He declared that he had never in his life shipped an egg backwards and he didn't intend to begin doing so then.

for farmers along their banks to market their products in that state.[3]

The area of North Carolina is divided naturally into three geographic regions, the coastal plain, the piedmont, and the Appalachian or mountain region. The coastal plain belt extends from the ocean inland to the fall line of the rivers. Although not identical at all points with the fall line, a line following the western boundary of Granville, Wake, Harnett, Cumberland, and Robeson counties is used in this study to divide this region from the piedmont. Near the fall line the land is gently rolling, but becomes comparatively level near the coast. Although the coastal plain is often regarded as a geographic unity, it contains several subregions which differ considerably from one another. The soil of the northeastern counties of Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Gates, Hertford, Chowan, and Bertie is more adaptable to grain crops than to cotton and tobacco. Consequently, its economy differed somewhat from that of the plantation area of the middle coastal plain. Moreover, the commercial ties of the northeast were with Norfolk rather than with any other part of North Carolina. Along the sounds in the counties of Tyrrell, Hyde, Beaufort, and Carteret there are large areas of infertile sandy soil. Further inland, however, the soils are clayey and sandy loams of remarkable fertility.

The middle or piedmont region of the state is a low plateau extending from the fall line of the rivers westward to the mountains. It is bounded on the west by a line which approximates the western boundaries of Surry, Yadkin, Alexander, Catawba, Cleveland, Rutherford, and Polk counties. In the ante-bellum period, the piedmont and the mountain region together were often designated as the West. Generally, the soil of the piedmont is not so fertile as that of the middle coastal plain, but is well adapted to the production of black tobacco, corn, cereals, and grasses. Considerable water power is developed by the fall of the rivers in this area thereby providing many sites along the Yadkin and Catawba suitable for the location of manufacturing industries.

[3] W. C. Kerr, *Physiological Description of North Carolina*, pp. 7-9; Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, pp. 4-5.

West of the piedmont is the Appalachian or mountain area, consisting of a narrow plateau with an average elevation of 2000 to 3000 feet lying between the Blue Ridge on the east and the Smoky mountains on the west. Difficult of accessibility and containing only a limited amount of fertile land, it remained sparsely settled and undeveloped throughout the ante-bellum period.[4]

The geographic features of the state fashioned its economic life. Although North Carolina was not one of the largest slaveholding states, advantageous geographic conditions planted the plantation-slavery economy firmly in the coastal plain. As early as 1790 in only three eastern counties did slaves form less than twenty per cent of the total population. In 1840 slaves formed 42 per cent of the population of the section. From 1840 to 1860 the slave population of the East increased 35.4 per cent as compared with only 26.4 per cent increase in the white population.[5] In 1860 slaves composed 44.2 per cent of the total population of the section, whereas the percentage for the entire state was 33.5. Of the sixteen counties[6] in the state having a larger slave population than white in 1860, all except three were in the coastal plain. The section was one of fairly large slaveholdings, the average being 10.9 slaves. Approximately 14.4 per cent of the slaveholders owned more than twenty each. The ownership of slaves was well distributed among the population, 36.2 per cent of the free families being slaveholders as compared with 26.3 per cent for the state. The table below gives the size of slaveholding in the coastal plain in 1860.[7]

[4] The discussion of the geographic features of North Carolina was taken from the following sources: Edmund Ruffin, *Sketches of Lower North Carolina,* pp. 52-55; W. C. Kerr, *op. cit.,* pp. 5-23; Ebenezer Emmons, *North Carolina Geological Survey, Part II: Agriculture,* pp. 26-28; *Report of the North Carolina Geological Survey: Agriculture of the Eastern Counties,* pp. 36-37, *Geological Report of the Midland Counties of North Carolina,* pp. 3-22.

[5] Computed from *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Population,* I, 52-54.

[6] Anson, Bertie, Caswell, Chowan, Edgecombe, Franklin, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Jones, Lenoir, Northampton, Perquimans, Pitt, Richmond, and Warren.

[7] Statistical information was computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agriculture,* pp. 235-236. It is important to note that when the East is compared with the entire state the inclusion of the large

PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVEHOLDERS

Number of slaves	*Number of owners*
Under 5 slaves	42.2%
5 and under 10	24.3%
10 and under 20	19.1%
20 and under 50	11.5%
50 and under 100	2.4%
100 and under 500	0.5%

By the close of the ante-bellum period a staple producing economy was characteristic of the eastern part of the state. Cotton, tobacco, and rice were the principal staples. The production of rice was concentrated in the southwest, mainly in Brunswick, New Hanover, Columbus, Bladen, Sampson, and Duplin counties. Tobacco was of primary importance in only three eastern counties, Granville, Warren, and Franklin. From 1840 to 1860 the production of tobacco in the East increased 88 per cent. Cotton was the great staple of the section, the cotton belt extending southward from Halifax and Northampton counties. The production of this crop increased rapidly during the decades 1840-1860, the 1860 crop being 357 per cent greater than that of 1840. In 1860 the East produced 67 per cent of the total cotton crop of the state as compared with only 49 per cent in 1840.[8]

The prevalence of the plantation was evidenced by the average size of landholdings, 431 acres per farm as compared with the state average of 354 acres. Of the farms having from 500 to 1000 acres and of those having over 1000 acres, 68.3 per cent and 73.3 per cent respectively were in the East. More significant is the fact that the average acreage under cultivation per farm was 119 acres in the East, as compared with 97 for the

figure for the East raises the state average considerably. If the comparison were made with the remainder of the state the contrast would appear more striking. By way of comparison with other states it is interesting to note that 33 per cent of the families in Virginia and 48 per cent of those in South Carolina held slaves. The average number per slaveholding family was nine in Virginia and fifteen in South Carolina. U. S. Census Office, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 135.

[8] The production of tobacco increased from 8,212,662 pounds in 1840 to 15,456,537 in 1860. Cotton production increased from 21,362 bales of 400 pounds each to 97,805. *Sixth Census of the U. S., 1840*, pp. 176-177; *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 104-109.

state. The table below shows the size of farms in the coastal plain in 1860.[9]

	Per cent of the total number of farms in the East
3 and under 10 acres	4.7
10 and under 20	8.7
20 and under 50	25.9
50 and under 100	23.3
100 and under 500	33.4
500 and under 1000	3.1
1000 and over	.9

The development of the plantation-slavery regime was never so complete in the coastal plain as in the lower South. Only a small percentage of the arable land was devoted to the three chief staples, cotton, tobacco, and rice.[10] Moreover, in a considerable section of the East the plantation was practically nonexistent. In the counties on the coast, such as Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Chowan, Tyrrell, Hyde, and Carteret, only an inconsiderable amount of the staples was grown. Landholdings were likewise smaller in these counties. Throughout the coastal plain, agriculture was in general more diversified than in the lower South. Large amounts of food crops were produced and large numbers of meat animals raised. In 1860, for example, the cash value of animals slaughtered averaged $11.87 per inhabitant of the section, exceeding the average for the remainder of the state.[11]

The majority of the white inhabitants of the East were not slaveholders, but small farmers who raised wheat and corn and perhaps some cotton and tobacco. For labor they depended upon their families and an occasional hired hand. On the sounds and inlets many engaged in fishing. Also there were merchants, mechanics, and members of the professional classes.[12] In addition, the comments of numerous travelers attest the fact that

[9] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 104-109, 210.

[10] The census does not give such figures. However, a study of the total production of the staples, the average output per acre, and the number of acres under cultivation seems to indicate that such was the case. The figure arrived at by the writer, 8.5 per cent of the land under cultivation in the three staples, seems too small; yet the figure was probably not appreciably larger.

[11] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 104-109.

[12] *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Population*, pp. 657-680.

there was a considerable number of "poor whites." These unfortunate beings were the poorest of the non-slaveholders. Olmsted described those he met in the turpentine region of the East as "uneducated, poverty-stricken vagabonds . . . without habitual, definite occupation or reliable means of livelihood." They spent most of their time hunting, working only when necessity forced it. According to Olmsted entire families of this class often possessed household property valued at less than twenty dollars.[13] Others described "their sickly and slovenly appearance, habitual drinking, tobacco chewing, utter ignorance, strange dialect, inert behavior, and such strange proclivities as clay-sucking, resin-chewing and snuff-dipping."[14]

In spite of the dominance of agriculture and of the presence of a considerable number of "poor whites," the East was the wealthiest section of the state. In 1860, the cash value of its farms averaged $2820 as compared with the state average of $2138.[15] The average per capita (free inhabitants) wealth was $1189 as compared with $836 for the state.[16]

Although the East like the remainder of the state was primarily rural and agricultural, its commercial and industrial development was of some importance. It contained the largest towns and commercial centers in the state, Wilmington, Fayetteville, New Bern, and Raleigh. Its banking resources were greater than those of the remainder of the state, twenty of the state's thirty-six banks being located in this section.[17] However, lacking mineral resources essential to the development of a manufacturing economy and without any advantageously sit-

[13] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 319, 348-349, 350.

[14] A. N. J. Den Hollander, "The Tradition of 'Poor Whites'," in W. T. Couch, ed., *Culture in the South*, p. 412. The high rate of adult white illiteracy seems additional evidence of the large number of "poor whites" in the East. In 1850 adult whites who could not read and write formed 15 per cent of the total white population, as compared with 13.3 per cent for the state. *Seventh Census of the U. S., 1850*, pp. 307-308.

[15] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agriculture*, pp. 104-109.

[16] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, p. 309.

[17] *Turner's North Carolina Almanac*, 1861, pp. 26-28; B. B. Holder, The Three Banks of the State of North Carolina, pp. 310-311.

nated city which could become the center of a commercial regime, the section was destined to have an agricultural economy with its attendant industries. Among these were fisheries, blacksmith shops, tanneries, saddlery and harness works, lumbering, turpentine manufacturing, carriage works, and flour mills. Practically its only real manufacturing, exclusive of that directly associated with agriculture, were nine cotton mills, seven of which were in Cumberland County. Yet, as is indicated by the table below, its industrial activity in 1860 was of some consequence.[18]

Number of manufacturing establishments	2291
Average capital investment per establishment	$2069
Annual value of product per establishment	$4084
Average number of employees	3.6
Per capita (free inhabitants) investment	$17.00
Per cent of total wealth in manufacturing	1+%

The East was the first section of the state to be settled and in 1860 its population of approximately 489,000 was greater than that of either the piedmont or mountain section. In the decades prior to 1860, however, its white population did not increase as rapidly as that of the piedmont and by that date the largest white population was found in the latter section.[19] The sparsity of settlement is indicated by a population density of only twenty-four inhabitants per square mile. The great majority of the whites of the East were of English origin, though Scotch Highlanders in Cumberland, Harnett, Sampson, Robeson, and Bladen, and a considerable number of Scotch-Irish formed important elements in the population.[20] The English brought with them their religion and as a result the Episcopal church found its greatest strength in the coastal plain. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians were also numerous.

The political characteristics of the coastal plain, as well as its socio-economic features, served to accentuate the distinctive-

[18] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Manufacturing,* pp. 420-437. The capital invested in manufacturing increased from $1,831,227 in 1840 to $4,741,051 in 1860, 158 per cent. The increase slightly exceeded that of the piedmont for the same period. *Sixth Census of the U. S., 1840,* pp. 184-185.

[19] *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Population,* pp. 358-359.

[20] R. D. W. Connor, *Race Elements in the Population of North Carolina,* pp. 11, 55.

ness of the section. Being the first region of the state to be settled, for the first few decades of the nineteenth century it had more counties than the other two sections.[21] Since the Constitution of 1776 allowed one senator and two members of the House of Commons from each county, the East was able to dominate the General Assembly. This body elected the governor, judges, solicitors, and justices of the peace. Control of the legislature consequently meant virtual control of the state. The piedmont, increasing more rapidly in population than the East, demanded a reform in the basis of representation. Resisting stubbornly, the East was able to withstand the demand for change until 1835, when a constitutional convention was held. The convention submitted the following amendments to the people: that senators should be elected from districts established on the basis of taxes paid to the state; that membership in the Commons should be distributed among counties on the basis of federal population, each county having at least one member; that elections and sessions of the legislature should be held biennially; that the governor should be elected by those qualified to vote for members of the Commons; that free Negroes should be disfranchised; and that a uniform poll tax should be levied on all slaves from the ages of twelve to fifty. These amendments were supported by only one eastern county, Granville. Nevertheless, because of the support of all the other counties except Moore and Person they were adopted.

As the end of the ante-bellum period approached the coastal plain became increasingly the stronghold of the conservative Democratic party. Whether the Democratic party in the state was a conservative states' rights party which opposed progressive reform because it was dominated by the wealthy, conservative East or whether the East went into the party because of its conservatism is a matter of small moment. The important point is that the Democratic party came to be dominated largely by that section. Although the Democrats under the leadership of David S. Reid of Rockingham County championed the constitutional amendment which granted the suffrage to every free white man twenty-one years of age who had paid taxes, it was

[21] As late as 1860 there were forty counties in the East, thirty-one in the piedmont, and fifteen in the Appalachian region.

not because the eastern Democrats desired such reform. Repeated defeats at the polls and insistent demands by the more liberal western elements accomplished the change in spite of the conservatism of the East. Indeed, long years of struggle in state politics to maintain the status quo against a rapidly growing liberal western section which demanded reform in representation and more liberal expenditures for internal improvements was of considerable importance in strengthening the states' rights philosophy in the East. Opposition to increased expenditures, protective tariffs, and anti-slavery views in national politics accorded with the position of the coastal plain on state issues.[22]

In political, as well as socio-economic factors, the northeast differed decidedly from the middle coastal plain region. It was a commercial area interested in federal aid to commerce and especially toward opening an inlet to Albemarle Sound in the vicinity of Nag's Head. Desirous of positive legislation by the federal government, it had no sympathy with the negative philosophy of the middle East which envisaged a central government with only very limited powers. Consequently, it was a center of Federalist strength in North Carolina as long as that party existed and for the remainder of the ante-bellum period was the stronghold of the Whig party in the East.

The piedmont was not so clearly differentiated from the entire state as either the East or the mountains. Indeed, its socio-economic system mirrored the chief features of both coastal plain and mountain region. In many respects the piedmont typified North Carolina as a whole. Slaves did not bulk as large in the total population of the section as they did in the population of the state, the percentages in 1860 being 24.4 and 33.5 respectively. Randolph County had only 10 per cent slaves and Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, and Stanly had less than 20 per cent. There was little change in the proportion of slaves to whites from 1840 to 1860. In 1840 slaves formed 25.8 per cent of the total population. Although the number of slaves in-

[22] No attempt has been made to discuss these political developments in detail. Information about them is available in C. C. Norton, *The Democratic Party in Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, especially chap. IV, and in Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, pp. 31-36.

creased 31 per cent during those years, the rapid increase in the whites prevented any substantial change in the percentage which slaves formed of the total population. Slaveholdings were generally small in this area, the average being only 7.9 slaves. Over half of the slaveholders owned less than five. Only 8.4 per cent of the slaveholders could qualify as planters by the ownership of twenty or more. The infrequency of slaveholding is demonstrated by the fact that only 23.5 per cent of the families owned slaves. The table below gives the size of slaveholdings in the section in 1860.[23]

PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVEHOLDERS

Number of slaves	*Number of owners*
Under 5 slaves	50.6%
5 and under 10	24.9%
10 and under 20	15.9%
20 and under 50	7.3%
50 and under 100	.9%
100 and under 500	.2%

In two sections of the piedmont, however, the plantation-slavery regime had by 1860 become well established and slaves were much more numerous than in the section as a whole. In the tier of counties on the Virginia border, where tobacco was an important staple, slaves formed 57 per cent of the population of Caswell, 46 per cent of that of Person, and 38 per cent of that of Rockingham. Along the South Carolina line, the production of cotton was of considerable importance, and slaves composed 51 per cent of the population of Anson County, 50 per cent of that of Richmond, and 38 per cent of that of Mecklenburg. In no other county in the section did slaves form as large a part of the population as the state average of 33.5 per cent.[24] The expansion of the staple crop economy in the piedmont is shown by the increased production of cotton and tobacco from 1840-1860. The 1860 tobacco crop of 16,922,013 pounds and the cotton crop of 46,356 bales represented increases of 99 and 112 per cent respectively over 1840.[25]

[23] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.,* pp. 235-236, *Ninth Census of the U. S., 1870, Population,* I, 52-54.

[24] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.,* pp. 235-236.

[25] *Sixth Census of the U. S., 1840,* pp. 176-177, *Eighth Census, 1860, Agri.,* pp. 104-109.

Although tobacco and cotton were important crops in a few counties, the plantation-slavery system was not dominant in the economy of the piedmont. The soil of the greater part of the section was not suited to the production of such staples as rice, cotton, and tobacco. Also, the lack of adequate transportation facilities long impeded the spread of a staple producing economy into those counties to which it was adaptable. The piedmont was a region of small farms on which grain and livestock were the principal products.[26] The prevalence of the small farm is indicated by the fact that the average size of landholdings was 278 acres as compared with 354 for the state and 431 for the coastal plain. Farms contained on the average 88 acres under cultivation as compared with 97 acres for the state. The predominance of the small farm is further demonstrated by the fact that 70.2 per cent of the farms in the section contained less than one hundred acres each. Of the farms in the state containing from 20 to 50 acres and from 50 to 100 acres, 47.5 per cent and 51.8 per cent respectively were found in this region. Landholding was more widely distributed than in the remainder of the state. It was the only section in which over half of the free families were landholders. The table below gives the size of farms in the piedmont in 1860.[27]

	Per cent of total number of farms in piedmont
3 and under 10 acres	1.5%
10 and under 20 acres	4.8%
20 and under 50 acres	32.5%
50 and under 100 acres	31.4%
100 and under 500	28.3%
500 and under 1000	1.1%
1000 and over	0.2%

The small farmer of the piedmont generally owned enough land to enable him and his family to live in moderate comfort.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 104-109. Using the same method in computing the percentage as that used for the coastal plain, the writer has found that only 5.1 per cent of the acreage under cultivation in the piedmont was in the three staples, rice, tobacco, and cotton. In 1860, the per capita value of animals slaughtered in the section was $9.48, approximately one dollar less than the state figure.

[27] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 104-109, 210.

The number of those who lived on the verge of poverty and want was undoubtedly smaller than in the remainder of the state. That this was true seems evident by the fact that in the coastal plain 13.4 per cent and in the mountains 14.6 per cent of the farms contained less than 20 acres, an amount too small to support a family, whereas the percentage for the piedmont was only 6.3.[28] The yeomen farmers generally did not produce for the market and were not appreciably influenced by the fluctuations in the prices of the staples. They owned a small amount of land, stock, and equipment and produced at home the greater part of what they consumed. Although they never knew luxury, their level of living was above that of destitution. Log cabins, homespun garments, coarse and monotonous foods, and crudeness of speech and manners were all associated with the small yeomen farmers. In spite of this, "as a class they were honest, proud, and independent, had confidence in life, had desires and usually ambition, and in a measure were substantial."[29]

Although the spread between those possessing most wealth and those having very little was probably less in the piedmont than in the other sections, it was not a wealthy region. The cash value of its farms averaged but $1729 as compared with the state average of $2138,[30] and its per capita (free inhabitants) wealth was only $679 as compared with $836 for the state.[31] It contained but thirteen of the state's thirty-six banks.[32]

The piedmont possessed natural resources which could form the basis of a more diversified economic life than was possible in either the East or mountain area. It is of course true that the lack of coal-iron centers made impossible under existing technology the development of heavy, mechanized industry. The section was abundantly endowed, however, with advantages for

[28] Computed from *ibid.*, p. 210.

[29] Hollander, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-410. It is interesting to note in this connection that in 1850 the piedmont had the lowest percentage of adult white illiteracy in the state, 11.5 per cent of the total white population. *Seventh Census of the U. S., 1850,* pp. 307-308.

[30] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.,* pp. 104-109.

[31] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics,* p. 309.

[32] *Turner's North Carolina Almanac,* 1861, pp. 26-28.

light, processing industries. Its geographic position placed it in close proximity to the important raw materials of the state, cotton, tobacco, and lumber. More important was the fact that the water power suitable for manufacturing is almost entirely confined to the interior of the state. That the leading men of the section were aware of its industrial possibilities is abundantly evident by the geological surveys of water power sites, speeches and newspaper editorials, and the establishment of small factories at the best sites.[33] Nor is the fact to be overlooked that the middle region of the state was settled primarily by Scotch-Irish and Germans, hard-working and thrifty, who were accustomed to working with their hands.[34]

The most important manufacturing industry of the piedmont was cotton textile. In 1860 there were thirty cotton mills located in seventeen counties of the section, Alamance and Randolph containing five each. In addition, there was some manufacture of iron, machinery, agricultural implements, firearms, and boots and shoes. In general, the manufacturing of this area was more industrial in character than that of the East, which in the main was accessory to agriculture. The table below shows the extent of manufacturing in the section in 1860.[35]

Number of manufacturing establishments	1206
Average capital investment per establishment	$3857
Annual value of product per establishment	$5694

[33] Ebenezer Emmons, state geologist, wrote in 1856 of a waterfall on the Catawba River: "It is by no means an extravagant expectation that this place will, at no very distant day, sustain ten thousand inhabitants, who will be engaged mainly in manufactures." *Geological Report of the Midland Counties,* p. 10.

[34] The resource basis of industrialism in North Carolina is discussed in the following works: Ebenezer Emmons, *Geological Report of the Midland Counties;* E. W. Zimmermann, "Resources of the South"; Elizabeth Y. Webb, Development of the Textile Industry in North Carolina (MS. in Brookings Institution); Philip Davidson, "Industrialism in the Ante-Bellum South"; Dan Mabry Lacy, The Beginnings of Industrialism in North Carolina, 1865-1900 (MS. thesis, U. N. C. Library); W. B. Goebel, A History of Manufactures in North Carolina Before 1850 (MS. thesis, Duke Library).

[35] Computed from *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Manufacturing,* pp. 420-435. From 1840-1860, the capital invested in manufacturing increased from $1,551,122 to $4,652,337, or 151 per cent. *Sixth Census, 1840,* pp. 184-185.

Average number of employees	4.6
Per capita (free inhabitants) investment	$16
Per cent of total wealth invested in manufacturing	2%

Though settled long after the coastal plain, by 1860 the piedmont contained the largest white population of the three sections. Its population density of twenty-four per square mile equaled that of the East. The majority of the whites of the middle section of the state were of Scotch-Irish and German stock. Among the characteristics of the Scotch-Irish were a love of liberty, stern religious faith, stubbornness of intellectual convictions, and calm temperament. Though respecters of law and order, the Scotch-Irish did not hesitate to disregard law when it seemed to oppose either their interests or their convictions. They cared little for the fine points of constitutional argument and legal procedure. It would not be expected that the theory of state sovereignty would appeal strongly to them unless they could identify theory with their interests and convictions. If they saw such an identity, they were ready to destroy the entire social fabric rather than submit to injustice. The Germans were the thriftiest and most industrious element in the population of North Carolina. Intelligent and law-abiding, they were the most conservative force in the life of the state. They took little active interest in politics and were not greatly swayed by the political cross currents of the 1850's. When the Southern Rights movement gathered momentum, they remained content with the Union, believing that safety lay in the preservation of the political status quo.[36]

Diversity was a characteristic feature of the religious life of the piedmont. There were a few Episcopalians among the upper classes, but generally the religion of the gentry was the Presbyterian. Among the yeomen farmers, the Baptists and Methodists were especially strong. The Germans were divided among the Lutheran, German Reformed, and Moravian churches. In Alamance, Chatham, Guilford, Randolph, and Surry counties, Quakers were found in considerable numbers. This sect maintained a persistent opposition to slavery until late in the ante-

[36] R. D. W. Connor, *Race Elements in the Population of North Carolina,* pp. 16-18, 88, 94, 110.

bellum period, thereby contributing to a more wholesome attitude on the subject in the state.[37]

As a section, the piedmont possessed a rapidly growing population, the most diversified economy in the state, and a large number of independent yeomen farmers. Its socio-economic characteristics made it an inevitable advocate of democratic reform in state government. It resented especially the undemocratic provisions of the Constitution of 1776 which gave the control of the state to the coastal plain.[38] Lacking adequate transportation facilities and possessing few educational institutions, the piedmont and the mountain section pressed for economic and social reform. Since the East controlled the legislature, the efforts to liberalize the economic and social policies of the state were futile. Seeing this, the western sections joined hands to demand constitutional reform. Finally, in 1834 a bill submitting to the voters the question of "Convention" or "No Convention" passed the legislature. After a heated campaign, the Convention was carried by the West in spite of strong eastern opposition. The amendments proposed by the Convention of 1835 were adopted as a result of the almost unanimous support of the counties in the western sections.

When the Whig party was organized in 1834-35, its greatest strength lay in the West. Small farmers and artisans entered the party largely because of their opposition to the policies of the Jackson administration and to the coastal plain area which controlled the Democratic party in the state.[39] The majority of North Carolina Whigs probably cared little for the constitu-

[37] Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina,* pp. 331-370.

[38] The principal undemocratic features of the Constitution of 1776 to which the piedmont objected were: representation in the legislature was based on the county, rather than upon population; membership in the senate and commons was restricted to owners of three hundred and one hundred acres of land respectively; the governor had to own property valued at over one thousand pounds; only owners of fifty acres or more could vote for senators.

[39] The western sections of the state were particularly offended by the opposition of the Jackson administration to the distribution among the states of funds derived from the sale of public lands. It was hoped that this money might aid internal improvements and education. No less distasteful was Jackson's opposition to the Bank and to liberal federal expenditures for internal improvements. No attempt has been made in this study to give a detailed treatment of the political policies of the Whig

tional problem of states' rights versus centralization. However, they were tremendously interested in internal improvements and democratic reform of the state government, both of which were opposed by the East. Since the interests of the West and East were opposed in state politics, it was difficult for the two sections to ally themselves on federal policies. The piedmont was not the seat of a well-established social regime which it was anxious to maintain, but on the contrary experienced constant social and economic change. Consequently, it never constructed a conservative states' rights philosophy designed to maintain the status quo. In fact, its long struggle against the conservative East made the western part of the state not wholly unresponsive to the aggressiveness of expanding federal power. Yet, since there was an incipient plantation-slavery regime in parts of the piedmont, its position on federal affairs was not so consistent as that of the East. While in general by 1860 it was opposed to the anti-slavery movement, protective tariffs, and increased federal expenditures, it was less vocal and less united in its opposition than the coastal plain.

The fifteen counties of the mountain area in 1860 formed the least populous and least developed area of the state, having an aggregate population of about 119,257. The geographic features of the section precluded any considerable development of the plantation-slavery, staple crop regime. Likewise, its mountainous character plus the lack of transportation facilities made it an isolated, self-sufficient area separated from the remainder of the state. In 1860 it still had many of the characteristics of a frontier region—scarcity of capital, sparsity of population, little contact with other areas, and lack of social advantages. Naturally, slavery was of little importance in such a region. In 1840 slaves composed only 11.3 per cent of the total population and by 1860 their proportion had declined to 10.2 per cent. Burke with a slave population of 26 per cent was the only county having as much as 20 per cent slaves. Moreover, the ownership of slaves was confined to 11.6 per cent of the families. Holdings were generally small, averaging 6.5 slaves. The pre-

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party. This can be found in H. D. Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, 1834-1861.

dominance of the small owner among the small number of slaveholders is clearly indicated by the table below which shows the size of slaveholding in the Appalachian region in 1860.[40]

PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVEHOLDERS

Number of slaves	*Number of owners*
Under 5 slaves	52.9%
5 and under 10	23.9%
10 and under 20	11.3%
20 and under 50	4.8%
50 and under 100	0.7%
100 and under 500	0.2%

The ratio of unimproved to improved land was high in the mountains as is to be expected in an undeveloped region. This fact accounts for the relatively large size of landholdings, the average being 381 acres per farm. On the average 315 acres were unimproved leaving only 66 acres of cultivated land per farm as compared with the state average of 97 acres. The numerical predominance of the small farm is demonstrated by the fact that 82 per cent contained less than 100 acres. The table below shows the size of farms in the section in 1860.[41]

	Per cent of the total number of farms in mountains
3 and under 10 acres	3.7%
10 and under 20	10.9%
20 and under 50	40.2%
50 and under 100	27.2%
100 and under 500	17.5%
500 and under 1000	0.3%
1000 and over	0.1%

The majority of the freemen of the mountains belonged to that class of yeomen farmers which was so characteristic of the piedmont. The yeoman farmer of the mountains, however, owned less arable land, less farm equipment, and in general lived on a somewhat lower plane of existence. The cash value of farms averaged $1354 as compared with the state average of

[40] Computed from the *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 235-236; *Ninth Census, 1870, Population*, I, 52-54.

[41] Computed from the *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, p. 210.

$21.38,[42] and the per capita wealth of the section was only $343, less than half the state figure.[43]

The number of "poor whites" in the mountain region undoubtedly exceeded the number of that class in the piedmont and perhaps was as great as the number in the coastal plain. That the members of this class were poor, crude of manners and speech, ignorant, superstitious, and possessed of social peculiarities strange to inhabitants of other areas is unquestionably true. Except for a small percentage at the bottom of the social scale, however, they were in no sense an inferior group biologically. Their manner of life was the result of their peculiar geographic environment and in the least accessible parts of the mountain region has changed remarkably little since then.[44]

This area contained no real manufacturing. Its industrial activity was confined exclusively to a few handicraft industries, such as blacksmith shops, tanneries, grist mills and saw mills, essential to a self-sufficient economy. The table below shows the extent of manufacturing in the section in 1860.[45]

Number of manufacturing establishments	192
Average capital investment per establishment	$1611
Annual value of product per establishment	$2370
Average number of employees	2
Per capita (free inhabitants) investment	$3
Per cent of total wealth invested	0.8%

The Appalachian region possessed the social characteristics of a frontier society. Its educational and religious institutions were few. It had few newspapers and their circulation was

[42] Computed from the *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 104-109.

[43] Computed from the *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, p. 309. The cash value of animals slaughtered was also less in the mountains, being $8.29 per inhabitant as against $10.52 for the state. *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Agri.*, pp. 104-109.

[44] In 1850, adult white illiterates formed only 13 per cent of the total white population, as compared with 15 per cent for the East and 13.3 per cent for the state. However the census figure of only two adult white illiterates for Henderson County is obviously incorrect; consequently, too much reliance cannot be placed in the above percentage. *Seventh Census*, 1850, pp. 307-308.

[45] Computed from the *Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860, Manufacturing*, pp. 436-437.

small. Its population density was only nine per square mile as compared with nineteen for the state. As a section, it took little interest in the ordinary affairs of the remainder of the state and nation. Politically, it was strongly democratic in theory and practice. On state issues, it favored the democratization of the state government and state aid to internal improvements and education. On national issues, its position was similar to that of the piedmont, although it was less vocal in expressing it. There was little active defense here of the plantation-slavery regime. The small farmer of the mountains despised the Negro but so long as the Negro remained in the South, he was insistent that the black man remain a slave. The theory of state sovereignty meant little to him. Indeed, the social, political, and economic characteristics of the mountain region made it inconceivable that it should take any active part in the defense of Southern Rights.

Conclusion

The plantation-slavery regime was firmly established in the coastal plain in the ante-bellum period. Although the counties bordering the sounds were not a part of the staple producing area and although the non-slaveholder was an important element in the population even in the plantation area, slavery was nevertheless a dominant socio-economic institution in the East. Rapidly becoming a minority section in the state in the ante-bellum period, the coastal plain was thoroughly versed in a political philosophy and program of limited governmental action. When as a part of the plantation-slavery region of the South it realized that the South was becoming a minority section in the Union, it was not difficult to make the transfer of defense of a politico-economic regime from the arena of the state to that of the nation. The traditional opposition of an agrarian section to increased governmental powers was strengthened by a determined defense of its own peculiar civilization which it conceived as being attacked. Indeed, slavery was so vital a part of the life of the East, that an attack upon it was regarded as a threat to the white civilization of the region. It was impossible to conceive of that civilization apart from slavery. Thus it was that the anti-slavery movement took on a much more ominous appear-

ance to the coastal plain than to other sections of North Carolina.

The socio-economic characteristics of the piedmont and mountains, on the other hand, made it inevitable that they should regard the anti-slavery movement with less foreboding. The western part of the state possessed a more diversified economy than the East. The incipient development of manufacturing foretold extensive industrial activity in the future. It was natural that in such an area the desire for political independence from the North should be accepted reluctantly. Moreover, there were elements in the life of the western area which were positively opposed to slavery. The persistent opposition of the Quakers in the piedmont to the institution was of considerable importance in maintaining for many years in that area more freedom of opinion on the subject. Likewise, it acted as a deterrent to an enthusiastic adherence to the secession movement as it gained strength in the state during the fifties. In addition to this religious opposition there were important economic factors which produced among the yeomanry indifference and even opposition to the slave system. Members of the artisan class thought that the slave robbed the freeman of his wages.[46] Likewise, the many small farmers were of the opinion that the system was a burden upon the poorer classes of the population. It was to be expected that small landowners of the up-country, who had for generations struggled against the dominance of the coastal plain in state affairs, would view with suspicion a Southern Rights movement whose main strength lay in the plantation-slavery region. Many non-slaveholders were apt to think that Southern Rights meant primarily the rights of the slaveholder. Finally, the sparsity of population characteristic of the western part of the state, together with the limited circulation of news, made concerted action possible only upon the most urgent matters. Thus it was that the mountains and much of the piedmont remained largely indifferent to the secession movement in the eighteen-fifties.

[46] F. T. Olmsted, *A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 357, 367, 373; G. G. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, p. 565.

CHAPTER II

STATES' RIGHTS IN NORTH CAROLINA PRIOR TO 1847[1]

North Carolina emerged from the Revolution imbued with a strong particularistic spirit. Emphasis upon and interest in state affairs absorbed the energies of political leaders. The result was that the state took little interest in the affairs of the Confederation. Delegates to the Congress of the Confederation from North Carolina were more conspicuous by their absence from meetings than by their participation. When the Congress invited the states to send delegates to Philadelphia in 1787 for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation, the General Assembly appointed a delegation of five to represent the state. The move in the Assembly to send delegates was promoted primarily by the conservatives, who were interested in strengthening the central government, and four of the five delegates were conservatives. The North Carolina delegation represented the views of that conservative minority in the state which desired a strong central government capable of maintaining stability, advancing commerce, and demanding public respect. It was not representative of the views of the majority of North Carolinians who were apparently well satisfied with the government provided by the Articles.[2]

It is not to be supposed that the North Carolina delegates, though they desired a stronger Union, favored a genuine na-

[1] No attempt has been made to treat thoroughly the subject of states' rights in North Carolina prior to 1847. Such a detailed study is not within the scope of this work. This chapter attempts to summarize the states' rights movement in order to provide the reader with a sufficient background for the main part of the study. For a more detailed treatment of various aspects of the states' rights movement, consult the monographs cited in the footnotes of this chapter.

[2] H. M. Wagstaff, *State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina 1776-1861,* pp. 9-17.

tional government rather than a confederation of states. Although they favored strengthening the powers of the central government, they did not intend that North Carolina should lose her sovereignty as a state.[3]

Upon the completion of the new Constitution, provision was made for its ratification by conventions in the states. The Federalists (those in favor of the Constitution) having gained control of the General Assembly were able to call a state convention to meet at Hillsboro in July, 1788, to consider the question of ratification. The anti-Federalists, led by Willie Jones in the northeast, Timothy Bloodworth in the southeast, Judge Samuel Spencer, Major Joseph McDowell, and Thomas Person in the central and western counties, campaigned vigorously. They denounced the federal judiciary, declared that the poor would be burdened with taxation, pointed to the lack of provisions guaranteeing the rights of individuals, and criticized the failure to protect the rights of the states. Public opinion crystallized on the issue of ratification. The western counties were in general opposed to the Constitution, while those in the extreme East were in favor of it; sentiment in the middle East was divided. The anti-Federalists were successful and elected a large majority of delegates to the convention. The farmers of North Carolina looked upon the Constitution as an instrument designed to aid the commercial interests. There was also the firm belief that it would benefit the eastern part of the state at the expense of the western.

The debates in the Hillsboro convention reveal the views of the delegates on the nature of the new government. In the debate over the clause making the Constitution, the laws of the United States, and all treaties made under the authority of the United States the supreme law of the land, Timothy Bloodworth expressed the particularistic views of the anti-Federalists. He declared that the new Constitution "would sweep off all the constitutions of the states," would be "a total repeal of every act and constitution of the states," and would produce "an abolition of the state governments."[4] On this point the Fed-

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 18; Louise Irby Trenholme, *The Ratification of the Federal Constitution in North Carolina*, pp. 90-91.

[4] Elliot, *Debates*, IV, 179.

eralist leaders adhered to sound state sovereignty doctrine, holding in general that the new Constitution was a compact between the states. Both William R. Davie and Richard Dobbs Spaight, members of the Philadelphia convention, declared that the new government intended a stronger Union without destroying the sovereignty of the states.[5]

The anti-Federalists, in control of the convention, proposed a resolution that a bill of rights should be added to the Constitution and suggested twenty-six amendments, one of which guaranteed the reserved rights of the states. The resolution was carried by a vote of 184 to 84. An attempt by the Federalists to pass a ratifying resolution was defeated by a majority of one hundred. The delegates who cast votes in favor of ratification represented the counties of Currituck, Chowan, Camden, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Carteret, Bertie, Tyrrell, and Sumner.[6] In general, the larger slaveholders and landholders of the commercial eastern counties were Federalists, whereas the small farmers and non-slaveholders of the interior were anti-Federalists.[7] The propertied groups sought to curb democracy, maintain stability, and defend the existing social regime. With a large radical party in the state, the best means of accomplishing this end was a strong central government dominated and controlled by the upper classes.

After all the other states except Rhode Island had ratified the Constitution, sentiment in North Carolina for ratification increased and another convention was called to meet in November, 1789. Before the meeting of this convention, the new government had gone into operation and both North Carolina and Rhode Island were viewed as independent states. When the convention met, the Federalists were in the majority and North Carolina ratified the Constitution by a majority of 118 votes. The main reason for a reversal of public opinion was the fact that the dissolution of the old Confederation left North Carolina in an isolated position. Though suspicious of a strong central government and conscious of its rights as a state, North

[5] Elliot, *Debates,* IV, 148, 155, *et seq.;* H. M. Wagstaff, *Federalism in North Carolina,* pp. 13-14; Wagstaff, *State Rights,* pp. 24-25.

[6] Elliot, *Debates,* IV, 242-244; Trenholme, *op. cit.,* pp. 163-164.

[7] Trenholme, *op. cit.,* pp. 19, 156-163.

Carolina nevertheless desired to remain united with its sister states. The assurances of the Federalist leaders that the Constitution was a federal compact and that the federal government was the agent of the states, along with the fear that Congress might adopt economic measures against North Carolina, converted a sufficient number of anti-Federalists to bring the state into the Union. North Carolina entered the new Union reluctantly and with the firm belief that it was becoming a member of a compact of states.[8]

The attitude of North Carolina toward the nature of the Union was shown in 1790 in its opposition to the assumption of state debts by the federal government. Hugh Williamson, Federalist member of Congress, held that assumption would be an invasion of those rights which were reserved to the states and that North Carolina intended no such broad delegation of powers when it ratified the Constitution.[9] Governor Alexander Martin, in his address to the General Assembly of 1790, viewed assumption as inconsistent with the "independence and internal sovereignty of the state." The House of Commons passed a resolution condemning assumption "as dangerous to the interests and rights of North Carolina."[10] When a scheme was advanced for preventing the operation of assumption in the state, Archibald Maclaine, conservative Federalist, expressed his disgust as follows: "I find North Carolina will be North Carolina still, whether in or out of the Union."[11]

Both Federalist and anti-Federalist leaders in the state were strict constructionists in the early nineties. James Iredell, Federalist justice of the United States Supreme Court, in February, 1794, in his dissenting opinion in the case of *Chisholm vs. Georgia,* clearly enunciated the states' rights theory of government. His statement was completely agreeable to the rising states' rights Republican party and remained a cardinal principle in Southern political thought until the Civil War. Iredell

[8] Trenholme, *op. cit.,* p. 242; Wagstaff, *State Rights,* pp. 27-31.

[9] Wagstaff, *State Rights,* p. 33. The North Carolina delegates voted against the assumption bill.

[10] *N. C. State Records,* XXI, 877, 1055-56.

[11] Archibald Maclaine Papers, November 18, 1890, quoted in D. H. Gilpatrick, *Jeffersonian Democracy in North Carolina,* p. 49.

held to the theory of divided sovereignty, claiming that in all matters except those specifically delegated to the federal government the states remained sovereign.[12]

In 1798, the legislatures of Kentucky and Virginia adopted strong states' rights resolutions in protest against the Alien and Sedition Acts passed in that year by Congress. In the main the resolutions declared the federal government to be the agent of the states and the Constitution to be a delegation of authority to the federal government by the states; when the national government assumed undelegated powers its acts were unauthoritative, void, and of no force. Jefferson had chosen Republican North Carolina to enunciate states' rights doctrine, but the resurgence of Federalism forced him to choose another state. When the Kentucky resolutions reached North Carolina, conditions were unfavorable to a pronounced stand on the issue of states' rights. The death of an American seaman in a brawl between French sailors and citizens of Wilmington in 1796 and the capture of several North Carolina vessels in the West Indies by French privateers in 1797 resulted in a temporary increase of Federalist strength. Moreover, the naval war with France and the genuine fear of a more serious foreign war made North Carolinians conscious of the value of a strong central government. It was this state of affairs rather than any opposition or indifference to states' rights principles which determined the attitude of the state toward the Kentucky resolutions.[13] The House of Commons, not so strongly Federalist as the Senate, passed, by a vote of 58 to 21, resolutions which denounced the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional and "improper and unnecessary" and instructed the North Carolina members of Congress to secure their immediate repeal. The Senate, however, defeated the resolution by a vote of 31 to 9 and also tabled the Kentucky resolutions without a dissenting vote.[14]

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the Republican party, faced with the necessity of meeting problems, in some instances reversed its policy of strict construction. Neverthe-

[12] Wagstaff, *State Rights*, pp. 35-36.

[13] Gilpatrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-102.

[14] *Journal of the House of Commons*, 1799, p. 78; *Journal of the Senate*, p. 77.

less, the doctrines of strict interpretation of the Constitution, economy in governmental expenditures, and defense of agricultural interests were popular with small farmers and large slaveholders alike. When the Hartford Convention in 1814 reasserted states' rights principles, North Carolina admitted the right of sovereign states to protest against governmental policy, but thought the protest should be made through their legislatures and at a time when the country was at peace. A resolution that it was inexpedient to adopt any of the Hartford resolutions was passed by both houses of the legislature.[15]

That states' rights feeling was still strong in the state, especially when the interests of the controlling classes were threatened by federal policy, is evidenced by the opposition of North Carolina congressmen to the policy of internal improvements at national expense. During Monroe's first administration the opponents of the program claimed that Congress had no power to legislate on the subject. Nathaniel Macon, representative of the plantation slaveholding interests, perceived the relationship between expanding federal powers and the security of the slave regime. Macon feared that a sectional struggle over slavery was impending and that a strict construction of the Constitution was the South's best protection. In 1818, he cautioned Representative Bartlett Yancey of Caswell, who seemed disposed to support a liberal policy of internal improvements, thus:

> If Congress can make canals, they can with more propriety emancipate. . . . Let not love of improvements or a thirst for glory blind that sober discretion and sound sense with which the Lord has blessed you. . . . Your error in this will injure if not destroy our beloved mother, North Carolina, and all the South country. . . . Be not led astray by grand notions or magnificent opinions; remember you belong to a meek state and just people, who want nothing but to enjoy the fruits of their labor honestly and to lay out their profits in their own way.[16]

Macon realized that the expansion of the powers of the federal government would mean that ultimately the rights of the

[15] *House Journal,* 1815, pp. 12, 50; *Senate Journal,* p. 35.

[16] Quoted in W. E. Dodd, *The Life of Nathaniel Macon,* p. 310; for a fuller discussion of Macon's views see A. R. Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina, pp. 19-21.

minority would be subject to the will of the majority—that the agricultural, slaveholding South would be dominated by the industrial East.

The struggle over the admission to the Union of Missouri as a slave state in 1819-1820 proved that Macon's fears were well founded. The proposal to require of Missouri as a condition of admission that no more slaves be admitted to the state and that children of slaves be emancipated at the age of twenty-five led to a heated sectional debate on the constitutionality of placing restrictions upon the admission of a state. A compromise was proposed which would admit Missouri as a slave state but prevent the extension of slavery into the remainder of the Louisiana territory north of 36° 31′. All of the North Carolina delegates favored the admission of Missouri as a slave state, but upon the question of restricting slavery the delegation in the House divided six to six. Those who approved restriction were from western counties where slaveholding was of little importance; the opponents of restriction, with one exception, represented the slaveholding East.[17] The views of those who opposed restricting the extension of slavery were expressd by Nathaniel Macon. He defended slavery as a beneficent institution for an inferior race and argued that the entire Louisiana purchase should be open to slavery. Should the South approve the compromise plan, he declared that it would be an admission that Congress could restrict slavery.[18] The views of Senator Montford Stokes of Wilkes County were probably representative of those held by the advocates of the compromise. He held that Congress had the constitutional power to exclude slavery from a territory and that the majority of the House of Representatives probably favored the exclusion of slavery from all territory west of the Mississippi. Such being the case, he thought that the compromise would secure for the South the region south of 36° 31′ "as an asylum for slaves already too numerous to be comfortably supported in some of the Southern States." Representative of the small farm, non-slaveholding western section, Stokes had "a charitable and respectful regard for the feelings,

[17] *Annals of Congress,* 16 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 1586-1587.
[18] *Ibid.,* 16 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 219-233.

and even the prejudices of that great portion of the people of the Northern States who are averse to Slavery in any shape; and who would heartily join with us in any constitutional measure to get rid of the evil."[19]

Although there was some newspaper discussion of the controversy in North Carolina, neither the press nor the people of the state expressed alarm over the issue.[20] Perhaps one of the most remarkable features of the Missouri controversy in the state was the pronounced opposition of the *Minerva* (a paper opposed to the Republican party) to the extension of slavery. It not only admitted the constitutionality of restricting the extension of slavery but even advocated gradual emancipation.[21] That the *Minerva* was allowed to express freely its opposition to slavery indicates that there was not present the sensitiveness on the subject which was later characteristic of the state.

The socio-economic sectionalism in the state, which had appeared on the subject of the extension of slavery, reasserted itself in the presidential election of 1824. The middle East, the most highly developed section of the state and center of large slaveholdings and large landholdings, supported William H. Crawford of Georgia. His platform of economy in expenditures, opposition to the tariff, protection of slavery, and support of states' rights and strict construction was well adapted to the interests of the plantation-slavery regime. The ticket composed of Andrew Jackson for president and John C. Calhoun for vice-president carried the West and the extreme East bordering the sounds. These sections were undeveloped, greatly in need of internal improvements to facilitate transportation, and inhabited largely by small farmers who owned few or no slaves. Jackson's democratic appeal and both his and Calhoun's previous advocacy of internal improvements at federal expense were important causes of their strength in those sections.[22]

[19] Montfort Stokes to Gov. Branch, Washington, Feb. 27, 1820, *Raleigh Register*, March 17, 1820.

[20] For a full discussion of the Missouri Compromise controversy in North Carolina see A. R. Newsome, Presidential Election, pp. 30-32.

[21] Wagstaff, *State Rights*, pp. 40-44.

[22] The election of 1824 in North Carolina is thoroughly analyzed in A. R. Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina. The Jackson-Calhoun ticket received the electoral vote of the state.

When the East turned to Jackson in 1828 in opposition to Adams, the West became less ardent in its support of Jackson. Bitterly opposed to the East, the seat of Republican strength, and favorable to internal improvements, a national bank, and the distribution among the states of funds derived from the sale of public lands, the West allied itself with the new Whig party when it appeared in the early thirties.

The sectional controversy over the protective tariff which had become bitter in the late twenties was climaxed in 1832-1833 by the South Carolina nullification movement. The North Carolina legislature of 1827 adopted a resolution opposing the protective tariff.[23] As early as 1830 it was known that South Carolina would resort to nullification should Congress fail to reduce the tariff. The attitude of North Carolina toward such a program was made clear as early as the summer of 1830. At Fourth of July celebrations held throughout the state toasts were drunk praising the Union and condemning nullification.[24] In the years 1830-1832, the majority of the newspapers continued their denunciations of the "odious doctrine," at the same time demanding a reduction of the tariff. Only in the southern part of the state where, because of close economic ties, South Carolina influence was strong, was there approval of the doctrine. The Salisbury *Western Carolinian* supported nullification and urged commercial cooperation with South Carolina.[25]

Among the opponents of nullification, there was a division of opinion on the question of states' rights. Thomas Ruffin, eminent jurist and a believer in the right of secession, pronounced absurd the notion that a state could be in the Union and at the same time deny the operation within its borders of laws enacted by the federal government.[26] On the other hand, Lewis Williams of Surry County, member of Congress, expressed the views of the nationalistic group in the state when he said: "I am opposed totally to the doctrine of nullification and deny to any state either in convention or in ordinary legislation the right to secede from the Union unless she proceeds from the

[23] *Journal of the North Carolina General Assembly, 1827-28,* p. 101.
[24] Wagstaff, *State Rights,* p. 50.
[25] *Raleigh Register,* November-December, 1832.
[26] Thomas Ruffin, Application for Pardon.

revolutionary principle."[27] William Gaston, a strong Federalist and an ardent lover of the Union, was greatly alarmed at the threat to the Union from sectional controversies. In 1833, he wrote to his son-in-law in the following prophetic vein:

> There has been for several years, and there is now, a settled design among some of the leading bold and artful politicians on this side of the Potomac to establish a separate Southern Confederacy. Of this there is no doubt. The Tariff and Nullification were seized on as means for this end. These have failed—but the design has not been abandoned. It will be prosecuted with unabated perseverance; and the honest fears of the Southern Slave-holders and the fanaticism of the Northern Abolitionists are relied upon to bring about a conviction that the interests and feelings of the different sections of our country are too contradictory to render the Union consistent with the good and harmony of the whole.[28]

The adoption of an ordinance of nullification by the South Carolina convention and the issuance of President Jackson's famous proclamation brought the crisis to a head. The North Carolina legislature adopted resolutions which expressed devotion to the Union, condemned the existing tariff, and declared the doctrine of nullification "revolutionary in its character" and calculated to lead to "a dissolution of the Union."[29]

Although Jackson's proclamation probably received the approval of the majority in the state, leading states' rights men made no secret of their opposition. The venerable Nathaniel Macon pronounced the proclamation as bad as nullification. He declared himself opposed to nullification, but expressed his firm belief in the right of secession which he considered "the best guard to public liberty and to public justice that could be desired."[30]

[27] Williams to Willie P. Mangum, Sept. 14, 1830, Mangum Papers.

[28] Wm. Gaston to Donaldson, Dec. 8, 1833, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, "William Gaston a Southern Federalist of the Old School and his Yankee Friends 1778-1844," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society,* XLIII, 439-440.

[29] *Senate Journal,* 1832-33, p. 99; *House Journal,* 1832-33, pp. 224-229. The vote on the resolutions condemning nullification was 49 to 9 in the Senate and 98 to 22 in the House.

[30] Macon to Samuel P. Carson, February 9, 1833, quoted in Dodd, *op. cit.,* p. 385.

The force bill, which provided for military aid if necessary in collecting the revenue of the United States, was generally condemned by North Carolinians. According to Representative Samuel P. Carson, it "empowered [the executive] to ride rough-shod over the sovereignty of a State."[31] While the state unquestionably disapproved of nullification, it is not to be assumed that this implied a repudiation of states' rights. On the contrary, the faith of the majority in this doctrine was not materially weakened by nullification. Moreover, it is probable that the force bill served to increase their sensitiveness on the issue of states' rights.

The subject of slavery received little public consideration in the state after the Missouri controversy until the rise of the abolition movement. The answer of the South to the threats of the abolitionists was a more rigid control of the slave population. In 1830 and 1831 North Carolina enacted a series of laws dealing with Negroes which forbade teaching slaves to read and write, provided serious punishment for harboring runaways, regulated the emancipation of slaves, and strictly regulated the activity of free Negroes.[32] No sooner had North Carolina made these provisions for controlling her Negro population than the Nat Turner insurrection occurred just across the border in Southampton County, Virginia. The plot apparently extended into North Carolina and the neighboring country was soon wild with excitement. Rumors of slave uprisings spread in every direction. Wilmington armed itself in defense of a supposed attack. Raleigh, likewise, made ready to defend itself, and Hillsboro organized a company of militia to send to the defense of the capital. Several slaves in New Hanover, Duplin, and Sampson counties were tried, convicted, and quickly executed.

The intense excitement resulted in the placing of more restrictions upon slaves and free Negroes by the next legislature.[33] Fearful of slave uprisings and believing that the activity of the Northern abolitionists was calculated to lead to dissatisfaction among the Negroes, the people of the South determined

[31] *Cong. Debates,* 22 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 1825-1827.

[32] *Laws of North Carolina, 1830-31,* pp. 11-16. These laws were passed prior to the Nat Turner rebellion.

[33] Wagstaff, *State Rights,* pp. 55-58.

to make clear their position on incendiary literature, the right of a state to control its own affairs, and the entire subject of slavery. The North Carolina legislature of 1835 passed a series of strong states' rights and pro-slavery resolutions. These resolutions received the support of both Whigs and Democrats and undoubtedly represented the views of a large majority of the population. They stated: 1. That North Carolina had the sole right of regulating the activity of slaves within the state; 2. That the Southern states should pass laws preventing the circulation of incendiary literature within their borders; 3. That other states should enact laws restricting publications of an incendiary nature; 4. That the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia would be viewed as the first step toward general emancipation; 5. That Congress should enact laws keeping incendiary literature out of the mails.[34]

Both the Democratic party, successor to the states' rights Republican party, and the newly formed Whig party upheld and defended the institution of slavery. Conditions within both the national and state Whig party, however, made it impossible that it should become the party of the slaveholder in North Carolina. In the first place, the increasing anti-slavery element in the party in the North and West was a serious obstacle to making it a pro-slavery party. More important, perhaps, was the local composition of the party. Although many large slaveholders were Whigs, the main strength of the party was found among the non-slaveholders. The Whig party originated in the state in opposition to the Democratic party which was dominated by the middle eastern plantation-slavery region. Consequently, its greatest strength was in the western counties where the slave population was small. The party also contained the great majority of Quakers in Guilford, Alamance, and Randolph counties, who were actively opposed to slavery. Yet, since the slave regime was so thoroughly established in North Carolina, the Whigs could not hope to control state politics without professing defense of the institution. Accordingly, they vied with the Democrats in defending slavery. Illustrative of this position was their condemnation of the Vermont Resolu-

[34] *Laws of North Carolina, 1835,* pp. 119-121.

tions of 1837, which asserted the right and duty of the federal government to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia,[35] and their opposition to the reception of anti-slavery petitions by Congress. Representative Abraham Rencher warned the North that the South would not submit to interference with her domestic institutions. Since the abolitionists insisted on flooding Congress with anti-slavery petitions which resulted in heated debates and sectional hostility, he thought it best that they be laid upon the table without being read.[36] Representative Kenneth Rayner, in opposing the reception of abolition petitions by Congress, warned that continued sectional hostility would lead to bloodshed.[37] Nevertheless, the Whig leaders were in general less vigorous in their sectionalism than the Democrats. Such men as Willie P. Mangum, George E. Badger, and William A. Graham opposed extreme states' rights views. When the "gag" rule which forbade the reception of abolition petitions was rescinded in December, 1844, only one North Carolina Whig voted for its retention.[38]

The North Carolina Democrats, strong in the plantation-slavery area, made the defense of slavery their principal care. In 1836, a group of Democrats of Jackson County asked Van Buren, the Democratic presidential candidate, whether or not he believed Congress had the constitutional power to interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia. Van Buren admitted the right of Congress to regulate slavery there but promised that he would oppose any effort to use the right.[39] In 1840, Democrats of Richmond County adopted a resolution that they would support no man for the presidency "who does not give the South satisfactory assurances, that he is opposed to the wild and mischievous movements of the abolitionists."[40] Although Van Buren attempted to assure the South of his soundness on slavery, he was not popular among North Carolina

[35] *Raleigh Register,* May 9, 1837.

[36] Abraham Rencher, *To the Freemen of the Tenth Congressional District of North Carolina, March 9, 1839.*

[37] *Cong. Globe,* 27 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 46-50.

[38] *Ibid.,* 28 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 7.

[39] Martin Van Buren to J. Amis and Others, March 4, 1836, N. C. Letters from the Van Buren Papers, 1824-1858.

[40] Walter F. Leak to Martin Van Buren, March 21, 1840, *ibid.*

Democrats. Already the abolition agitation in the North was making Southerners distrustful of Northern political leaders. The North Carolina Whigs had not become a Southern sectional party in 1840, but on the contrary supported many policies inconsistent with Southern interests.

The indifference of the national Whig party to the doctrine of states' rights made Whigs in the state less insistent upon the doctrine of strict construction. Moreover, the aggressive position of the Whig West in state politics made it easier for that section to approve a liberal interpretation of the constitutional powers of Congress. The industrial possibilities of the piedmont and the popularity of Henry Clay, leading Whig protectionist, had by 1840 made the protective tariff acceptable probably to a majority of the Whigs in the state. Likewise, by this date only a few Whigs considered a national bank unconstitutional.[41]

When the question of the annexation of Texas arose in 1837, a majority of both Whigs and Democrats in North Carolina favored it. When the issue was revived in 1844, however, a considerable number of Whigs were opposed to it. Clay's "Raleigh Letter" of April 27, 1844, in which he opposed annexation undoubtedly influenced many. When the Democrats introduced a resolution in the House of Commons in December, 1844, favoring the annexation of Texas, it was defeated by a vote of sixty to forty-nine, with sixty Whigs opposing and only seven favoring the resolution.[42] The Democrats were openly in favor of annexation and the nomination of Polk in 1844 on an expansionist platform greatly pleased them. That Clay's opposition to annexation was not approved by a considerable number of Whigs was evidenced in the election of 1844. Although the total vote in the state was larger than that of 1840, the Whig majority was considerably less. The opposition of North Carolina Whigs to annexation was clearly not implacable since the Whig members of Congress voted for the admission of Texas as a state in December, 1845.[43] When early in 1846 war

[41] Pegg, Whig Party, pp. 124-127, 136-137.

[42] *House Journal 1844-45,* pp. 538-539.

[43] A full discussion of the issue of annexation may be found in: Pegg, Whig Party, pp. 231-235; Norton, *Democratic Party,* pp. 109, 138-142;

was declared on Mexico, the Whig representatives supported without opposition the bill providing for a declaration of war and the appropriation of funds for its conduct. During the war, however, North Carolina Whigs did not hesitate to criticize the origin of the war, declaring it to have been brought about by the rashness and selfishness of Polk. Although they made no active attempt to hinder the successful prosecution of the war, believing it to be entirely unnecessary, they were on occasions lukewarm in their support. Whig leaders predicted that the acquisition of territory from Mexico would lead to a bitter sectional struggle. The conflict over the Wilmot Proviso and the extension of slavery into the territories proved them to be good prophets.[44]

Wagstaff, *State Rights,* p. 75; J. G. deR. Hamilton, *Party Politics in North Carolina,* p. 100.

[44] Pegg; Whig Party, pp. 225-226, 237-242.

CHAPTER III

SHALL THE TERRITORIES BE FREE?

Among the issues which contributed to the secession movement in the Southern states, that of slavery in the territories was of primary importance. When the issue arose in connection with the Louisiana territory, it was settled by the Missouri Compromise. In the years which intervened between this settlement and the acquisition of new territory, many disputes between North and South were adjusted through mutual concessions. Faith in the efficacy of compromise became prevalent among political leaders, and the conviction that sectional issues should be settled in such manner was widespread among the people. In spite of this faith in compromise, however, the excitement which had preceded the Missouri settlement, the growing abolition movement, and the increasing Southern defense of the "peculiar institution" assured another outburst of sectional antipathies should more territory be added to the Union in the future.

Even before the conclusion of the Mexican War it had become apparent that the United States would acquire considerable territory in the Southwest. In August, 1846, David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced in the House of Representatives his Proviso which would have prohibited the introduction of slavery into the new territory. In the months immediately following the introduction of the Proviso, North Carolina showed no interest in the measure. At that time the attention of the people of the state was centered upon the progress of the war, the tariff, and criticism or endorsement of the Polk administration. The passage of the Proviso by the House and the approval which the measure received in the North, however, convinced the South that the Proviso was a definite threat to Southern interests. The *Raleigh Register* (Whig), February 26, 1847, ex-

pressed alarm at the growing Northern opposition to Southern institutions. According to the *Register,* it was "time for party distinctions to sleep, and for the South to present a united front." During the congressional campaign of 1847 a few speakers pointed out "that the great consideration of the South, in the coming Presidential contest, would be *the rights of the Slave States,* and the destruction of the provisions embodied in *Wilmot's Proviso.*"[1] These, however, were but sporadic outbursts; county political meetings generally ignored the Proviso and it received only slight attention in the congressional campaign.

As the anti-slavery sentiment in the North became more manifest, and as other slave states became concerned, a few individuals in North Carolina began to speak out in opposition to what many Southerners considered a movement against the rights of the South. A correspondent in the *North Carolina Standard* (Democratic) declared that before the South would submit to the "flagrant injustice" of the Wilmot Proviso it would "encounter the dread alternative of disunion, and if forced on it, civil war."[2] An editorial in the *Standard* pronounced the Proviso both "treacherous" and "dangerous" and declared that if it were adopted "the Union will be destroyed as sure as God lives in Heaven!"[3] A few months later W. W. Holden, editor of this journal, warned the North that there was a point beyond which the people of the South "will not be driven, and *at which, come weal or woe, they will take their final stand.*"[4] Undoubtedly the Whig press was equally opposed to the Proviso, but it was in a difficult position. On the eve of a presidential year it would not have been wise politically to emphasize the very issue on which the Northern and Southern wings of the party were most at odds. Yet the *Register* was insistent to deny that the Whigs of North Carolina "are aiders and abettors of this unholy faction, in their crusade against Southern rights and Southern institutions."[5]

[1] Quoted from a campaign speech of Dr. Pritchard, Whig of Warren, in *Raleigh Register,* May 21, 1847; see also *North Carolina Standard,* October 20, 1847.

[2] September 1, 1847.

[3] September 15, 1847.

[4] December 8, 1847.

[5] November 20, 1847.

Apprehension of the powerful Northern opposition to the extension of slavery was reflected in the county political meetings in the early months of 1848. Democratic meetings in the slaveholding counties of Lenoir, Wayne, Wake, Warren, Craven, New Hanover, Franklin, Nash, Onslow, and Northampton condemned in no uncertain terms the principle embodied in the Wilmot Proviso.[6] The Democrats of Warren (the county having the largest percentage of slaves of any in the state) were especially outspoken; they denounced the Proviso as "an arrogant assumption of power—an audacious outrage upon Southern Rights and destructive of the ends of our glorious Union—and, come what may, cannot, and *will not,* be submitted to."[7] The State Democratic Convention, in April, reiterated this opposition, declaring that Congress had no authority over the institution of slavery and that the Democrats would oppose the Proviso "in whatever shape it may be presented."[8] On the other hand, at least eighteen Democratic meetings, chiefly in counties having few slaves, either ignored the Proviso or expressed no alarm over it.[9]

The position of the Whigs was by no means so clear. Fearing to open a breach in the national party ranks, both local Whig meetings and the State Convention ignored the issue of slavery in the territories. Not all, however, were quiet. Whig meetings in the large slaveholding counties of Halifax, Franklin, and Wake[10] viewed with regret the tendency of their Northern brethren to interfere in the slavery question.[11]

The members of the North Carolina delegation in Congress were generally moderate in their attitude toward the sectional

[6] See resolutions of these meetings in the *North Carolina Standard,* January-May, 1848.

[7] *North Carolina Standard,* March 8, 1848.

[8] *Ibid.,* April 19, 1848.

[9] *Ibid.,* January-May, 1848. The meetings were held in Beaufort, Moore, Robeson, Greene, Caswell, Halifax, Surry, Yancy, Granville, Ashe, Davidson, Sampson, Hertford, Person, Martin, Rowan, Gaston, and Anson. See Map I for the percentage of slaves in these counties.

[10] The percentage of slave population in the above counties in 1860 was 53 in Halifax, 50 in Franklin, and 37 in Wake. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860,* pp. 352-357.

[11] See resolution of these meetings in *Raleigh Register,* December, 1847-February, 1848.

controversy in 1846-1847. They expressed their determination to maintain the rights of the South, but made no threats to break up the Union. The Democratic members were unanimous in denying that Congress had any right to exclude slavery from the territories. The Whig members were divided on the constitutional question,[12] but were united in their opposition to the exercise of any such power by Congress. R. S. Donnell (Whig) was perhaps the most moderate of the North Carolina delegation in the House. He declared that the South would gain nothing from a doctrine of non-intervention and maintained that protective legislation by Congress was necessary for the establishment of slavery in sparsely settled territories. Nor would he admit that the extension of slavery advanced the interests of the slave states or strengthened the institution of slavery. He expressed himself as being opposed to the extension of slavery, considering such extension contrary to the interest of North Carolina.[13]

Although his position on the Wilmot Proviso had been moderate, A. W. Venable, Democrat, had by the summer of 1848 become a champion of Southern Rights. His activities in the years following were to mark him as the fire-eater of the North Carolina delegation. Taking the occasion offered by the seizure of seventy-seven slaves in the District of Columbia by abolitionists in April, 1848, he delivered a long and powerful speech in which he denounced the fanaticism of the abolitionists and vigorously defended the rights of the South. On the subject of disunion, he spoke pointedly:

[12] H. D. Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 226-228. George E. Badger, Whig Senator, upheld the right of Congress to legislate for the territories in all matters and either to establish slavery in them or exclude it. *Cong. Globe,* 30 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, p. 1175. Representatives Boyden, Donnell, and Outlaw held views similar to that of Badger. Thomas L. Clingman, though later denying the power of Congress to exclude slavery from the territories, was not clear in his position at this time. He admitted the right of Congress to regulate all property in the territories, but thought that it must act under the provisions of the Constitution. *Cong. Globe,* 30 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 41-48. Senator Willie P. Mangum represented the states' rights wing of the Whig party which expressly denied that Congress had any constitutional right to prohibit slavery in the territories.

[13] *Cong. Globe,* 30 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 1058-1061.

I love the Union. It cost much of the toil and blood of those who were dear to me. . . . But dear as it is—solemn as is the thought that it may be severed, I hail dissolution with contentment, yes, even with satisfaction, if the bonds of the union are to be maintained only to expose us to the taunts of fanatics and hypocrites. . . . These are the feelings of my heart, the opinions which I have well considered. I have weighed my expressions, and wish them to be taken in their strongest sense. The South asks no favors; and if any supposed that because they had said nothing until driven to it by these heartless machinations and outrages, they were afraid to assert their rights, they were under a total misapprehension.[14]

As early as December 1, 1847, the *North Carolina Standard* had announced that the primary issue in the presidential election of 1848 was "the doctrine of the Wilmot Proviso." It made it clear that no candidate could expect its support "who is not unequivocably sound on this . . . vital question." Although the Democratic party in North Carolina in local meetings and through the press had made known its opposition to congressional intervention with slavery in the territories, it was by no means interested in forcing a positive plank on the subject into the national Democratic platform. The North Carolina delegates to the Convention were satisfied with the statement in the platform denying the constitutional power of Congress to interfere with the domestic institutions in the states and condemning the activities of the abolitionists. They frowned upon the attempt of William L. Yancey of Alabama to have the doctrine of non-intervention expressly written into the platform.[15]

The nomination of Lewis Cass of Michigan met with general approval among the Democratic leaders in North Carolina, and the county and district meetings signified their willingness to support the national ticket. During the campaign the major efforts of the Democratic leaders were spent in attempting to prove Cass sound on the subject of slavery and denouncing the position of Millard Fillmore, Whig vice-presidential nominee, on the Wilmot Proviso.[16] In spite of the *Standard's* labored

[14] *Cong. Globe,* 30 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 653-654.

[15] *North Carolina Standard,* June 8, 1848.

[16] *Ibid.,* June-November, 1848; J. C. Dobbin to David S. Reid, June 16, 1848, D. S. Reid Papers, II. The location of the collection is given

support of Cass, it was soon apparent that the masses of the party in the state were not enthusiastic over their candidate. The charge of the Whigs that the true interests of the South had been bartered away *"to secure votes for an abolition, Wilmot Proviso candidate"* was emphasized with telling effect upon the voters.[17] The fact that Zachary Taylor was a Southerner and a slaveowner seemed proof enough to the people of the state that he was sound on slavery.[18]

The tendency of the country to divide along sectional lines was noted with alarm during the campaign, and fear was expressed for the future of the Union should such a trend continue.[19] It was apparent before the election that Taylor would receive the votes of many North Carolina Democrats and that Cass would fail to bring out the full Democratic strength.[20] Taylor's majority in the state was 8,154 in a total vote of 81,280. He received 2,181 votes more than Charles Manly, the Whig gubernatorial candidate, whereas Cass received 5,119 fewer votes than David S. Reid, the Democratic candidate for governor.[21] North Carolina chose to support a Southerner and a slaveholder regardless of party, rather than "a Northern man with Southern principles." The *Standard* commented as follows: "it is with pain that we confess the mortifying fact, that in this state we have lost hundreds of votes, solely on the ground that Gen. Cass was a Northerner and Gen. Taylor a Southern man!"[22]

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in the bibliography; only when there is more than one collection of the same title is the location given in the footnote.

[17] *Raleigh Register,* June 10, 1848.

[18] *Ibid.,* August 2, 1848.

[19] "You will see by the papers that Vanburen [*sic*] is a candidate in earnest . . . it is a strange move & has an alarming feature being a *sectional ticket.* Now if the south should make it a sectional issue & take Taylor . . . the Union is gone, it would stand not more than the 2d struggle & then where is our Power & Glory 'Busted' split into as many governments as there are sections. . . . What a Pitty [*sic*] but so it is. The Union will not continue ten years longer unless a great change comes over us." J. Cowles to Calvin Cowles, August 21, 1848, Calvin J. Cowles Papers.

[20] J. Cowles to Calvin Cowles, November 4, 1848, Calvin J. Cowles Papers.

[21] *North Carolina Standard,* November 17, 1852.

[22] November 15, 1848.

The anxiety which slaveholders felt on the subject of slavery was evident in the activities of the legislature of 1848-1849.[23] On November 27, Walter L. Steele, a states' rights Whig of Richmond, introduced in the House of Commons a series of strong pro-slavery resolutions. The resolutions declared that the territories were the common property of the states; that Congress had no right to pass any law making any discrimination between the states by which any of them would be deprived of its full and equal right in any territory of the United States, and

Resolved, That the enactment of any law, which should directly, or by its effects, deprive the citizens of any of the states from emigrating with their property into any of the territories of the United States, . . . would . . . be a violation of the Constitution, and the rights of the states . . . and in derogation of that perfect equality which belongs to them as members of this Union, and would tend directly to subvert the Union itself.[24]

The resolutions met the determined opposition of the conservative Whigs led by Kenneth Rayner and Edward Stanly. The latter expressed himself as opposed to "these as well as all other political resolutions" believing they served only to "kindle afresh the fires of discord." He was unsuccessful, however, in his attempt to have the resolutions laid on the table. On December 14, the resolutions were referred to a committee composed of James C. Dobbin, S. J. Person, Robert T. Paine, and Rayner.[25]

The proceedings of the legislature on the slavery resolutions attracted considerable public attention. The Whig press spoke disparagingly of this "string of South Carolina abstractions"

[23] The growing sensitiveness on the slavery issue revealed itself in the election of a United States Senator. Before the legislature had convened it had been pointed out that Badger's admission of a constitutional power of Congress to exclude slavery from the territories made him unfit to represent North Carolina in the Senate at a time when it was highly necessary that Southern Rights be defended. Anonymous writer in *North Carolina Standard,* November 22, 1848. Badger was reelected to the Senate but by a close vote. L. F. London, The Public Career of George Edmund Badger, p. 128.

[24] *House Journal 1848-1849,* p. 355.

[25] Proceedings of the legislature in *North Carolina Standard,* December 13, 20, 1848.

which "smacked of nullification" and cut off all hope of compromise by denying the authority of Congress to legislate on slavery in the territories.[26] The Democratic press, led by the *North Carolina Standard,* on the other hand, called upon the legislature to issue an ultimatum to the North. The *Standard* declared emphatically:

> We cannot believe that the people of the South will continue to sleep on, and to dream of "peace, peace, when there is *no* peace." . . . As we value the Union of the states, and as we would remain in it, undegraded and undisgraced, let us speak out NOW! . . . We call upon the Legislature of North Carolina—upon men of both parties in that body—to come up to this work at once, and let the voice of the state be heard. Let that voice be respectful, but firm and to the point; and by all means, LET IT BE UNANIMOUS.[27]

On December 28, the Select Committee reported to the House a set of resolutions, the fourth and fifth of which declared that any action of Congress which prevented citizens from emigrating with their slaves into any of the territories would be "contrary to the true meaning and spirit of the Constitution"; and that for the sake of preserving the Union the extension of the Missouri Compromise line would be accepted as a settlement, but this did not concede the power of Congress to pass a law excluding slavery from any territory of the United States.[28] The main support for the slavery resolutions came from the Democrats and a few states' rights Whigs such as Steele in the House and William B. Shepard in the Senate. The speakers supporting the resolutions contended that the people expected the legislature to take a stand on so vital an issue and moreover that, in view of the continued anti-slavery activity in Congress, it was their duty to give encouragement to the defenders of Southern Rights. In no case did a speaker give any indication that he desired disunion.[29]

There is no evidence that the people of the state were greatly

[26] *Raleigh Register,* December 13, 20, 1848.
[27] December 27, 1848.
[28] *House Journal 1848-1849,* p. 560.
[29] Speeches summarized in *North Carolina Standard,* December-January, 1848-49.

alarmed over the question of slavery in the territories.[30] The *Raleigh Register* protested against the legislature's wasting its time "upon these worthless South Carolina abstractions." It thought that a majority of the Whigs believed that Congress could constitutionally legislate for the territories even to the point of excluding slavery from them.[31]

Steele's resolutions were finally replaced by those of William B. Shepard, a pro-slavery states' rights Whig of Pasquotank, introduced in the Senate, January 15, 1849. The resolutions, as passed January 22, declared: (1) "that the citizens of each State are entitled to equal rights, privileges and immunities under the constitution"; (2) that the framers of the constitution had incorporated "into that instrument distinct and ample guarantees of the rights of the slaveholders"; (3) that the legislature viewed "with deep concern and alarm the constant aggressions" on slavery by "certain reckless politicians of the North"; (4) that the abolition of slavery or the slave trade in the District of Columbia or the exclusion of slavery from any of the territories "will be an act not only of gross injustice and wrong, but the exercise of power contrary to the true meaning and spirit of the constitution, and never contemplated by the framers thereof"; (5) that for the sake of preserving peace the legislature was willing that the Missouri Compromise line be extended to the Pacific, although it did not concede the constitutional power of Congress to exclude slavery from any of the territories; (6) and that the legislature believed that "the people of North Carolina . . . are devotedly attached to the Union . . . that they believe it is the duty of their public servants to discountenance whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned."[32] The resolutions received very little opposition. Four of the six passed the Senate unanimously and the fourth and sixth received only two and three negative votes, respectively. In the House, the largest vote cast against any of the first five was thirteen votes against

[30] The press comments in February on the activities of the legislature gave little attention to the slavery resolutions. See quotations from various papers in *ibid.*, February-March, 1849.

[31] January 13, 27, 1849.

[32] *Laws of North Carolina, 1848-1849,* pp. 237-239.

the fourth resolution; the sixth was adopted by a vote of 57 to 30.[33] Of the thirty votes cast in opposition to the strong Union resolution, twenty-six were Democratic and only four Whig. The opposition was drawn chiefly from the eastern and central Democratic counties where slavery was of economic significance. Of the twenty-seven counties represented in the negative vote, only six were strictly western and of those six, Mecklenburg, Cleveland, Catawba, and Lincoln were close to the South Carolina line and to the cotton growing region and were strong states' rights centers.[34]

Undoubtedly, North Carolina was strongly attached to the Union. The *Raleigh Register* was probably correct in its observation that even should a Southern confederacy be formed North Carolina could be induced to join it only as a result of direct interference in the domestic concerns of the state.[35]

During 1849 there were violent discussions on the subject of slavery in both the nation and the state which were but a prelude to the secession movement of 1850-1851. The introduction of the California and New Mexico bills in Congress in December, 1848, had reopened the slavery controversy. The extension of the discussion, shortly thereafter, to include slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia convinced the Southern extremists that some action must be taken to arrest the alarming anti-slavery movement. Accordingly, a meeting of Southern members of Congress was held which issued an address drawn up by Calhoun. The address called attention to the difficulty in recovering fugitive slaves, condemned the agitation of the abolitionists, and demanded equal rights for slaveholders in the territories.[36] A. W. Venable, Democrat, was the only North Carolina member who attended the meeting, and only Venable and J. R. J. Daniel, also a Democrat, were among the forty-eight who signed the address.[37] Senator Badger termed

[33] *Senate Journal,* p. 266; *House Journal,* pp. 733-736.

[34] All four of these counties elected secessionists in the convention election, February, 1861; fifteen of the twenty-seven counties elected secessionists. See Map III.

[35] January 10, 1849.

[36] J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850,* I, 104-105; R. K. Crallé, ed., *Works of Calhoun,* VI, 290-313.

[37] *North Carolina Standard,* February 14, 1849; Crallé, ed., *op. cit.,* VI, 312-313.

the meeting "a most unwise & dangerous proceeding—out of which no good can come, but much evil may" and he "would have nothing to do with it."[38]

Venable in a long speech in defense of Southern Rights in the House, February 26, took the occasion to defend the Southern address and the congressmen who signed it. He denied the charge that they were disunionists and insisted on the contrary, "We are the friends of the Union; but, sir, we prefer disunion to dishonour; . . . we are not ignorant, of our rights, or of the means of securing them. We love the union which has for its object tranquility, equal justice, and security; but, sir, no other. None of us will worship a devil because he is arrayed in an angel's robes."[39]

The Southern address received little notice in the state. The great majority of political meetings held in the spring of 1849 ignored the address altogether.[40] However, the *Fayetteville Carolinian* (Democratic) commended Daniel and Venable for signing it and declared them to be "of the right grit."[41] The *North Carolina Standard* thought the address was "distinguished by great ability, and . . . pervaded . . . by the proper spirit."[42]

The Whig press continued its strong devotion to the Union. Nor do the facts indicate that the people were alarmed by the possible exclusion of slavery from California and New Mexico. One writer observed "that the People care very little (if let alone) whether Slavery goes to California or not."[43] The *Raleigh Register* pointed out that California and New Mexico

[38] Geo. E. Badger to J. J. Crittenden, January 13, 1849, North Carolina Letters from the Crittenden Papers. He added: "Would to Heaven there were a little *true* moderation in our Councils—and that southern gentlemen were less like a half blind horse, starting at every bush and even the shadow of a bush."

[39] *Cong. Globe,* 30 Cong. 2 Sess., Appendix, pp. 161-165.

[40] Only two county political meetings have been found which gave any attention to the address. Democratic meetings in Greene and Washington counties adopted resolutions expressing their approval, whereas a large number of meetings took no notice of it. *North Carolina Standard,* February-May, 1849.

[41] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* February 14, 1849.

[42] February 7, 1849.

[43] W. H. Haywood, Jr. to Martin Van Buren, May 30, 1849, North Carolina Letters from the Van Buren Papers.

were not suited to slavery and consequently saw no reason for dissolving the Union as a result of the exclusion of slavery from those areas "unless it be to gratify Mr. Calhoun, and the Virginia politicians of the '98 School, in their dreaming abstractions."[44] One observer declared that "No: Caro. can never be brought to go for *disunion* because Congress does not consent to let her slaves go to California & be slaves still. The politicians who may make that experiment upon our People will be wofully [*sic*] disappointed in the end."[45] Venable's proposal that the legislature pass a bill which would establish non-intercourse with those states not respecting the constitutional rights of the South received the rebuke of the *Raleigh Register*.[46] Union sentiment was overwhelming in North Carolina at this time, and there was no advocacy of immediate disunion.[47] W. H. Haywood, Jr., prominent Democrat of Raleigh, in commenting on the state of public opinion in May, 1849, wrote: "Of one thing I feel sure and that is that our people (N. C.) will rise up against Disunion & Disunionists the moment they see that there is any peril of action."[48]

In the months preceding the congressional elections of 1849 the ground was prepared by the Democratic press and political meetings for an exciting contest. The Democrats emphasized the protection of Southern Rights as the major issue of the campaign. Local meetings declared they would support no man who

[44] January 27, 1849.

[45] W. H. Haywood, Jr. to Van Buren, March 11, 1849, North Carolina Letters from the Van Buren Papers.

[46] April 28, 1849; the *Raleigh Register* declared that not "a dozen men, in any one County in the State, will endorse it."

[47] In commenting on a disunion meeting in Columbia, S. C., the *Raleigh Register*, May 26, 1849, inquired: "But why has South Carolina been so aristocratic and exclusive in this matter? . . . We would have the Palmetto State to know that we have a few *imbeciles* in the old North, who would have felt proud to share in the noble work of disunion."

[48] Haywood to Van Buren, May 30, 1849, North Carolina Letters from the Van Buren Papers. In the same letter, Haywood wrote: "My own observation convinces me that there is less sensibility in the South about the question [the exclusion of slavery from California and New Mexico] than her politicians pretend there is. . . . The pol[ns]. are endeavoring to get up some excitement preparatory to the August Elections for Congress. So far they are quite unsuccessful."

did not believe that the Wilmot Proviso was "directly at variance with the spirit and intention of the Constitution."[49] The *North Carolina Standard,* edited by the ultra-Southern William W. Holden, was far in the lead in the agitation of public opinion. It affirmed its devotion to the Union with the Constitution, but declared that the Union without the Constitution would be but "an engine to oppress the weak and aggrandize the strong." *"Compromise,"* it wrote, *"we can only obtain by uniting together and demanding our rights."*[50] The *Tarborough Press* (Democratic) urged that there be no division "on the subject of slavery and Southern rights."[51] By July, even the conservative *Hillsborough Recorder* (Whig) was asserting we "will resist with all the force and power the God of nature has given us any and every encroachment upon the rights which it [the Constitution] guarantees to us."[52]

The most vigorous and heated contests took place in the fifth district, composed of Granville, Caswell, Person, Orange, and Chatham counties, and in the eighth, composed of Wayne, Greene, Lenoir, Jones, Craven, Carteret, Beaufort, Pitt, Hyde, Washington, and Tyrrell counties. In the fifth district, A. W. Venable, Democrat, was a candidate for reëlection against Henry K. Nash, Whig. The Whig press repeatedly charged that Venable was "an open and deliberate advocate of disunion" and declared that a vote for his opponent was a vote for the Union.[53] Venable's radical stand gave some basis to the accusation of the Whigs. He urged the slaveholding states to deny to citizens of states refusing to comply with the fugitive slave law the use of their courts to collect debts and the use of their harbors for carrying on trade, and to confiscate all debts which citizens of

[49] Resolution of the Democratic convention of the eighth district, New Bern, May 17. Wake County Democrats adopted a similar resolution. *North Carolina Standard,* May 30, 1849. A resolution adopted by the Democrats of Beaufort County, May 5, declared: "we will cherish the Union of the States as an imperishable legacy, . . . as long as our rights guarantied by the constitution are respected . . . we must remain [in the Union] as equals, or a separation, peaceable if possible, but forcible if necessary, must and will be the inevitable result." *Ibid.,* May 23, 1849.

[50] June 20, 1849.

[51] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* June 27, 1849.

[52] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* July 11, 1849.

[53] *Raleigh Register,* June 27, July 14, 18, 1849.

such states held against slaveholding states. When charged with disunion, he asserted his love for the Union, but declared that he preferred "disunion to dishonor" and "resistance to degradation.[54] Venable later declared that he openly asked all who did not prefer disunion to accepting the Wilmot Proviso or the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia not to vote for him.[55] Nash attacked Venable's policy of non-intercourse as suicidal and calculated to destroy the Union.[56] Venable was elected by an increased majority over his 1847 election.[57]

In the eighth district, the candidates were W. K. Lane, Democrat, and Edward Stanly, Whig. The Democratic press assailed Stanly for his unfriendly attitude toward Southern Rights. It was especially bitter against him for his opposition to the slavery resolutions in the preceding legislature.[58] The New Bern *Republican* (Democratic) declared that the main issue between Lane and Stanly was the unconstitutionality or the constitutionality of the Wilmot Proviso. The only issue, it asserted, was that of Southern Rights.[59] Although Stanly was undoubtedly more conservative in his views than his Democratic opponent, he assured the electorate that he would "oppose the Wilmot Proviso, the abolition of slavery in the District of Colombia [*sic*] and *abolition in all its forms.*"[60] Stanly was elected, but by a majority considerably less than the Whig majority in 1847.[61] The New Bern *Republican* concluded, "We must consider the result in the two Districts [the eighth and fifth] a triumph for Southern Rights." It declared, moreover,

[54] *Cong. Globe,* 30 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, p. 164; *Hillsborough Recorder,* July 25, 1849.

[55] Speech in Congress, February 19, 1850; refer to *North Carolina Standard,* March 13, 1849.

[56] See account of Venable-Nash debate in Chatham County, *Raleigh Register,* July 21, 1856.

[57] In 1847 Venable defeated John Kerr, his Whig opponent, by a vote of 4588 to 4435. The vote in 1849 was 4711 to 4001. *North Carolina Standard,* August 22, 1849.

[58] *North Carolina Standard,* July *passim,* 1849.

[59] August 1, 1849.

[60] Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* August 1, 1849.

[61] In 1847, Donnell, Whig, defeated Lane, Democrat, by a vote of 4293 to 3924; Stanly defeated Lane by a vote of 4987 to 4940. *North Carolina Standard,* August 22, 1849.

that Stanly was elected because the Whigs supported him regardless of his views and not because they approved them.[62]

The Whigs were largely successful throughout the state, electing six of the nine members of Congress, though generally by majorities less than those in the preceding election.[63] It would be unsafe to conclude that the election was a repudiation of Southern Rights sentiment and an endorsement of the Union. Union or disunion was not an issue and both Whigs and Democrats were much in accord on the slavery question. Although some of the Whig candidates admitted the constitutional power of Congress to exclude slavery from the territories, they were as vigorous as the Democrats in their opposition to the exercise of such power. In fact, the only thing shown by the election was that both Whigs and Democrats were unequivocally opposed to the Wilmot Proviso. The result was determined by the strength of the two parties and not by the attitude of the candidates on the issues of slavery and disunion.

The discussions during the campaign served to get the subject of slavery in the territories before the people as never before. In the months following the election there was an increased sensitiveness on the part of the people toward the slavery issue. Badger was bitterly condemned for his position that Congress had the right to exclude slavery from the territories.[64] The division of the Whigs on this issue, already in evidence in the preceding year, continued. States' rights Whigs condemned the *Raleigh Register,* party journal, for its failure to defend Southern Rights and insisted that "the whole South must act in union or we are gone."[65] The Charlotte *Hornet's Nest,* the most ultra of the Whig press, went so far as to charge the *Raleigh Register* with "Freesoilism."[66] Replying to such accusations, the *Register* termed the Proviso "unjust, illiberal, in violation of our fraternal connexion," but refused to abandon

[62] August 15, 1849.

[63] Results in *North Carolina Standard,* August 22, 1849.

[64] See a series of letters appearing in the *North Carolina Standard,* September-October, 1849.

[65] Writers in the Charlotte *Hornet's Nest* (Whig), quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* October 3, November 28, 1849.

[66] Quoted in *ibid.,* December 26, 1849.

its position that Congress had complete control over the territories.[67]

Thomas L. Clingman, Whig representative in Congress from the mountain district, followed the drift of Southern opinion and took a decidedly pro-Southern stand. On November 13, in replying to a letter of Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi, he wrote that the adoption of the principle of the Proviso would be a violation of the Constitution. He thought that the Southern states should resist such an attack. The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, he would regard as "an act of tyranny so insulting and so gross as to justify a withdrawal of confidence from such a government."[68] None, however, was so outspoken as the *North Carolina Standard,* which declared to the North: "We warn you, in the presence of the civilized world, and with all the solemnity which such an occasion can inspire, that if you fasten that Proviso upon us, with the evils which it certainly foreshadows, you must make up your minds, and that speedily, to undo the deed and repair the wrong, or we separate forever."[69]

As the year 1849 came to a close, the people of North Carolina were being made to believe by the agitation on the hustings and in the press that the anti-slavery movement was growing and that perhaps thereby the rights of the South were seriously endangered.

[67] October 20, 1849.

[68] His letter quoted in full in the *North Carolina Standard,* November 28, 1849.

[69] October 31, 1849.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

When Congress convened on December 3, 1849, a contest over the organization of the territories of California and New Mexico was assured. A large and influential group in the free states was determined that these territories should be free, whereas the South was equally determined that no congressional legislation should prohibit slavery from going into them. The hostility between representatives from the South and those from the North was intensified as a result of a bitter contest over the election of Speaker of the House.[1]

The sectional conflict which had developed in the speakership contest was further embittered by the continued agitation of the Wilmot Proviso and the problem of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. The trend of events seemed to promise fulfillment of the prophecy of a North Carolina Whig that the "infamous Mexican war has devised to us a handsome bone of contention, which will nigh if not quite sever the Union of the States."[2] According to this contemporary, "The old adage that 'Ill gotten wealth cannot permanently prosper' will, I fear, prove but too true in this case."[3]

The heated contest in Congress produced in the minds of many Union-loving North Carolinians the fear that "the sun of this Union will soon set."[4] The conviction was growing daily that even though the Wilmot Proviso be defeated at that session of Congress the principle would be continually before the Congress to disturb the peace and threaten the interests of the slave

[1] J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850,* I, 116-117; Howell Cobb of Georgia was finally elected Speaker.

[2] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Mary B. Pettigrew, December 26, 1849, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[3] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, December 27, 1849, *ibid.*

[4] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, January 24, 1850, *ibid.*

states. Southerners were coming to believe that, like it or not, the subject of disunion would be discussed in the halls of Congress and throughout the country until the event itself occurred.[5]

The first effect in North Carolina of the exciting events in Congress was a renewed emphasis on the maintenance of Southern Rights within the Union. Whigs, who had formerly viewed the agitation for defense of Southern Rights as mere political claptrap, now joined the movement to unite the South in defense of Southern institutions. For the first time there appeared in the state a concerted movement, deriving support from both political parties, with the definite object of obstructing the machinations of the Northern abolitionists. In January, the Wilmington *Commercial* (Whig) warned the anti-slavery fanatics of the North that "the sentiment at the South is assuming a sterner character than heretofore" and that "Unless there is a reform, and that speedily, there will be found an immense majority in all the Southern States who will very readily entertain a proposition for disunion."[6] The *North Carolina Standard,* self-delegated defender of Southern Rights, asked for assurances from the North that the rights of the South would not be assailed and warned that "One year hence may be *'too late'!*"[7] During the early months of 1850, the *Standard,* ably assisted by the Charlotte *Hornet's Nest* (Whig), led the press defense of Southern Rights, emphasizing the necessity of union in the South.[8]

[5] James Johnston Pettigrew, of Washingon and Tyrrell counties, North Carolina, at that time (January, 1850) travelling in the North was especially convinced of this. On January 8, 1850, he wrote: "I saw something of politics in Washington and am fully convinced that the Union cannot possibly last longer than five or six years, at the most. I am amazed when I see the rapid strides that the spirit of disunion has made in all quarters in the course of a year. No one considers it at all startling to discuss the matter in a calm tone, whereas a few years ago it was necessary to be worked up into a furious passion before the word could be uttered, and the only question seems now to be, the consequences of the act." See also his letter of January 9, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[6] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* January 16, 1850.

[7] January 16, 1850.

[8] See for example the *North Carolina Standard,* April 17, 1850.

The county political meetings of both parties show that both the Whigs and the Democrats were devoted to the Union but were also determined to maintain their rights. The Whigs of Chatham County expressed their "immovable attachment" to the Union and their determination "to maintain the rights of the Southern people as they stand connected with . . . slavery."[9] The Whigs of the slaveholding county of Wayne warned that either the adoption of the Wilmot Proviso or the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia would result in a dissolution of the Union.[10] The State Whig Platform likewise expressed devotion to the Union but at the same time demanded an adjustment of the slavery question.[11] The Whigs revealed themselves as "staunch Union men so long as there was no undue interference with slavery and no longer."[12]

The county Democratic meetings were even more vocal in their determination to defend Southern Rights.[13] Following the lead taken by the local meetings, the State Democratic Convention adopted a resolution declaring that the Union "is dearer to us than every thing else, besides our vital interests and honor; but that, while we thus yield to none in our attachment to it, we are still determined, happen what may, to resist all palpable violations of the Constitution, and all attempts to wield this Government by a mere sectional majority, to the injury and degradation of the Southern people."[14]

In the closing months of 1849, the Southern ultras had seized the opportunity presented by the increasing Southern resentment to the anti-slavery movement to urge the call of a Southern Convention. In October, Mississippi had issued a call to the other slave states to hold a Convention at Nashville.[15]

[9] *Raleigh Register,* March 27, 1850.

[10] *Ibid.,* February 27, 1850; see the files of the *Register,* February-April for resolutions of meetings in other counties.

[11] *Ibid.,* June 15, 1850.

[12] H. D. Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 320.

[13] Many of the county Democratic meetings took a stand on the Nashville Convention, which will be discussed *infra,* p. 57 *et seq.* See the files of the *North Carolina Standard,* February-May for the county resolutions.

[14] *North Carolina Standard,* June 19, 1850.

[15] Farrar Newberry, "The Nashville Convention and Southern Sentiment of 1850," *South Atlantic Quarterly,* XI, 261-262.

At that time, the call received little notice in the North Carolina press. Only the *North Carolina Standard* expressed approval of the idea, declaring that should the ensuing Congress take action inimical to slavery, it was the duty of North Carolina to resist. Moreover, it was of the opinion that should the other slave states elect delegates to the Convention it would be the duty of Governor Manly to convene the legislature in special session to assure North Carolina's representation in the Convention.[16]

Early in 1850, as a result of the anti-slavery activities in Congress and the propaganda of the extreme pro-Southern press, the Nashville Convention became a subject of contention in the state. Foremost among the advocates of the Convention among the press were the *North Carolina Standard* (Democratic) and the Charlotte *Hornet's Nest* (Whig). The latter led the movement for the Convention in the western part of the state. Replying to the criticism of the Whig press for its advocacy of the Convention, the *Hornet's Nest* declared that it would not be bound by the policies of either party in its defense of Southern institutions.[17] It assured its readers that whether or not the remainder of the state participated in the Southern movement Mecklenburg County would and "she WILL BE heard in the Convention."[18]

Although the Democratic press quite generally favored the representation of North Carolina in the Convention, no other paper was so energetic in its advocacy as the *North Carolina Standard*. On January 16, it announced that the Nashville Convention "is of the first importance to the South and to the Union, and . . . North Carolina ought, . . . to be represented in it." During February and March, the *Standard* continued to insist on representation in the Convention. "Let our watchwords," it urged, "be:—'Equality or Independence'—the union of the South for the sake of the Union and of Southern Rights."[19] The *Wilmington Journal,* the Wilmington *Aurora,* the *Fayetteville Carolinian,* the Goldsboro *Republican and Patriot,* and the New Bern *Eastern Carolina Republican* (Dem-

[16] November 21, 1849.
[17] February 2, 1850, *et seq.*
[18] January 5, 1850.
[19] February 6, 1850.

ocratic), the Raleigh *Star* and the *Goldsboro Telegraph* (Whig), and the *Biblical Recorder* were the other leading papers in the East which favored the Convention.[20] The *Eastern Carolina Republican* called upon the people of the district, Whigs and Democrats, to select delegates to represent them at Nashville.[21] "Let North Carolina now move in earnest," it urged, "and the prospect of a permanency of the Union, is greatly improved. North Carolina should be ready, and if there is no necessity for extreme measures her people will be rejoiced; if there is a necessity, we are assured she will unite cordially and actively with her sister States in resistance to aggression."[22]

The proponents of the Convention gave the following reasons for representation by North Carolina: 1. it will prove to the North that the Southern states are united on certain principles; 2. the Convention is called to preserve the Union, not to dissolve it; 3. if North Carolina is not represented and the other Southern states are, it would be placed in an unfavorable position in the eyes of its sister Southern states. The *North Carolina Standard* insisted that "These reasons *imperatively demand it* [Nashville Convention], *as one of the first and highest duties, which, at this time, the people of the South owe to themselves and to the Union of the States.*"[23] Almost without exception, the advocates of the Convention declared that it was not a disunion move but rather a move to strengthen the Union by protecting the rights of the South within the Union.[24] The charges of the opponents that it was a secession scheme were always vigorously denied.[25]

When the movement first began to receive attention in North Carolina, the Whig press was hesitant to condemn it. The *Raleigh Register,* January 23, cautiously advised that the

[20] *North Carolina Standard,* February 13, 27, 1850; the Raleigh *Times* (Whig) charged that the leading agitators for the Convention among the newspaper editors each owned from eighty-five to two hundred slaves. Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* March 27, 1850.

[21] February 27, 1850.

[22] March 6, 1850.

[23] February 20, 1850.

[24] Of the press supporting the Convention, only the Wilmington *Aurora* (Democratic) could reasonably be accused of open advocacy of disunion. See the *Newbernian,* February 19, 1850.

[25] *North Carolina Standard,* March 27, 1850.

proposed meeting, if rashly managed, "might work infinite and irretrievable injury," but if wisely directed, "might be productive of much good." Soon, however, the Whig press began openly to condemn the movement as a scheme of the disunionists. The *Raleigh Register* was opposed to the meeting whether it intended "to indulge in menacing and violent language," to present an ultimatum to the North, to nullify the Wilmot Proviso, or to prepare for secession.[26] The Salisbury *Carolina Watchman* and the *Newbernian* pointed out that several of the prospective delegates were advocates of "a dissolution of the Union."[27] The conservative *Fayetteville Observer* charged that the Convention was a Calhoun scheme designed "to demand impracticable and impossible concessions, and with a purpose and declaration, that if not granted, the South would secede."[28] The Washington *North State Whig,* February 6, 1850, cautioned its readers against the policy of "Mr. Clingman and his coadjutors in disunion." The Fayetteville *North Carolina Argus* expressed itself as "heartily sick of this everlasting twaddle about the South—the South—that word of talismanic charm with southern demagogues." "In the name of dignity and self-respect," it appealed, "let us forbear against further gasconading."[29] The main arguments used in opposition to the Convention were: 1. no cause for it existed at the time since no overt act against Southern Rights had been committed; 2. such a Convention could accomplish nothing; 3. the Convention was a scheme of disunionists; 4. the holding of a Southern Convention at that time would be a threat to the Union.

Early in 1850, numerous Southern Rights meetings composed of both Whigs and Democrats were held in the eastern slaveholding counties of Sampson, Edgecombe, Warren, Wayne, Cumberland, Columbus, New Hanover and Duplin.[30] The

[26] April 20, 1850.
[27] February 7, 1850; *Newbernian,* February-March, 1850.
[28] March 20, 1850.
[29] Quoted in A. C. Cole, *Whig Party in the South,* p. 174.
[30] See files of *Wilmington Journal* and *North Carolina Standard,* January-May, 1850, for the resolutions adopted by these meetings. A resolution adopted by a Southern Rights meeting held in Wilmington, January 29, read "neither can we yield up principle and honor, even if the maintenance of them should involve the sacrifice of our political and individual

meetings adopted resolutions which generally declared: that although they loved the Union they would separate rather than submit to injustice or sacrifice honor and principle; that the Nashville Convention offered an opportunity for the adoption of a platform upon which the South could stand united. The speakers voiced the necessity of presenting a united front to Northern aggression upon the rights of the South. Among the leading men in the state active for the Nashville Convention were Robert Strange, Warren Winslow, Weldon N. Edwards, and W. T. Dortch, Democrats, and Thomas L. Clingman and William B. Shepard, Whigs.[31]

On March 11 and 12, a Southern Rights Convention composed of delegates from New Hanover, Duplin, Columbus, Bladen, Robeson, Sampson, Cumberland, Onslow, and Brunswick counties was held at Wilmington. Robert Strange, Democrat, and Griffith J. McRee, Whig, were elected to represent that district at the Nashville Convention.[32]

In the West, Southern Rights meetings were held in Gaston and Mecklenburg counties.[33] In the latter there was an especially strong movement favoring representation in the Convention. In January, some two hundred and seventy-two leading citizens of Mecklenburg County, of both parties, signed a call for a meeting to be held at Charlotte in April.[34] The meeting, on April 23, elected Walter L. Steele, Whig of Richmond County, and Green W. Caldwell, Democrat of Mecklenburg, to represent the Mecklenburg district at Nashville.[35]

Meanwhile, the opposition to the Nashville Convention was not inactive. Edward Stanly, Whig member of Congress from North Carolina and a vigorous opponent of all disunion

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existence, in the dissolution of the Union and the bloody consequences likely to flow therefrom." *North Carolina Standard,* February 13, 1850.

[31] These men either addressed Southern Rights meetings or published letters favoring the Convention. The Raleigh *Star,* May 15, 1850, stated that many Whigs in the slave counties favored the Convention as the best means to compose sectional differences, to secure justice for the South, and to preserve the Union.

[32] *North Carolina Standard,* March 27, 1850.

[33] *Ibid.,* March 6, May 1, 1850.

[34] *Hornet's Nest,* February 2, 1850.

[35] *North Carolina Standard,* May 1, 8, 1850.

schemes, became alarmed at the excitement in the South and determined, if possible, to keep North Carolina out of the Southern movement. On January 11, he urged a friend in North Carolina to arrange it so that the papers in the West would "denounce the dissolution efforts of the chivalry destructionists of the South."[36] In Congress, Stanly was unsparing in his condemnation of the Convention. "If that Convention meets," he said, "and a proposition is made to consider even whether the Union ought not to be dissolved, I hope the citizens of Nashville will drive every traitor of them into the Cumberland River."[37] He took particular care to prevent the people of Jones and adjacent counties from taking a position favorable to the Convention by urging his friends in that vicinity to oppose all attempts to get up Southern Rights meetings.[38] Stanly's influence was great in the coastal counties of his district, and an attempt at a Southern Rights meeting in Beaufort County to adopt a resolution favoring the Nashville Convention was defeated.[39]

Even more severe than Stanly in his criticism of the Convention was John Kerr, prominent Whig of Granville County. Repeatedly, he denounced the Convention at public gatherings. At a Southern Rights meeting at Oxford, Granville County, March 5, he was largely responsible for the adoption of resolutions in opposition to the Nashville Convention. He declared that the whole idea was a scheme of Southern agitators and disunionists and that he "had never known of but one other such Convention in the history of this Government, and that was the Hartford Convention." Moreover, if the proposed Convention should confine itself to promoting Southern unity and giving expression to Southern sentiments, as its advocates had declared its purpose to be, it would be only an empty

[36] Stanly to John H. Bryan, John H. Bryan Papers, Raleigh.

[37] *North Carolina Standard,* March 27, 1850.

[38] On April 6, 1850, he addressed the following letter to James W. Bryan of New Bern: ". . . my immediate object in writing is to call your attention to the attempt that will be made at the next Supr. Court of Jones to get up a 'Southern Rights Meeting.' If you with . . . Donnell will exert yourselves a little, among the intelligent men of the county, you can put a stop to the meeting." Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

[39] *North Carolina Standard,* April 3, 1850.

pageant; if, however, it were designed to devise a scheme of disunion, it deserved "the reprobation of every patriot."[40] On another occasion, he was even more outspoken. The originators of the Nashville Convention, he charged, were designers of revolution and disunion, plotters against the security of the nation, and "infamous incendiaries" who would send "the temple of our liberties" up in flames.[41]

With the progress of the compromise measures in Congress, the sentiment in support of the Nashville Convention decreased. With the exception of the eastern counties and a few counties in the West on the South Carolina line, the idea had never been warmly received by the people of the state. The *Eastern Carolina Republican,* proponent of the Convention, complained "that the people of North Carolina, as a mass, have not seconded the movement of those who believed in the necessity and propriety of the Nashville Convention."[42] One shrewd critic of the Convention made the following comment on the attitude of the people:

> I am very sorry for some of the pol[ns] who have made asses of themselves but the Union is in no danger & we all see it is so. In a little while our people will become indifferent perhaps disgusted. The Disunionists are eating their own words—brimstonish as they were. . . . They have tried to break up the Union & the only reason they did not succeed is that the People are not willing.[43]

During the latter part of May, even the *North Carolina Standard,* foremost advocate of the Convention, rarely referred to the movement. William W. Holden, editor of the *Standard,* was by this time convinced that the Convention was "a dead question," and Robert Strange and R. M. Saunders (Democrats), former advocates, had come to the same opinion.[44]

[40] *Ibid.,* March 20, 1850; a more complete account of his speech is in *Raleigh Register,* April 20, 1850.

[41] Speech before the State Whig Convention, *Raleigh Register,* June 15, 1850.

[42] April 24, 1850.

[43] W. H. Haywood, Jr. to F. P. Blair, May 7, 1850, North Carolina Letters from the Van Buren Papers.

[44] On June 1, Holden wrote David S. Reid, Democratic candidate for governor, as follows: "In regard to the Nasheville [*sic*] Convention, that is a dead question. *I knew, four weeks ago, that you were opposed to it;* or rather that you thought it inexpedient now; but what of that? We

Before the date set for the Convention to meet, Strange and G. J. McRee, delegates from the Wilmington district, announced in a public letter that they would not attend the meeting. Since matters in Congress were then at such an uncertain state, they doubted the advisability of such a Convention, feeling that any resolutions which it might adopt, whether threatening or mild, would have an unfavorable effect upon the compromise proceedings in Congress. Moreover, they felt that a majority of the people of their district was opposed to a meeting of a Southern Convention at that particular time.[45] G. W. Caldwell and Walter L. Steele, delegates from the Mecklenburg district, also remained away from the Convention. Consequently, when the delegates of nine other Southern states assembled in Nashville in June, North Carolina was not represented.[46] The Charlotte *Hornet's Nest* felt "ashamed for our State, that she was not represented in that able, respectable and dignified convention."[47]

The resolutions adopted by the Nashville Convention received little attention in North Carolina. The people were much more concerned with the progress of the compromise in Congress. Generally, those who had favored the Convention praised its resolutions; those who had opposed the movement condemned the resolutions. The *Tarborough Press* (Democratic) thought the resolutions "calm and dignified in their tone, and

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are all for union at the proper time; and in going for it I but yielded to the will of the majority . . . Saunders occupies the same position you do in regard to it; *and so does Strange now.*" D. S. Reid Papers, II, 1845-1850.

[45] Letter published in full in the *North Carolina Standard,* June 5, 1850. They also stated: "Besides this, a Nashville Convention is a strong measure, full of consequences; when over, it will be like an exploded bomb, no longer feared, not even respected; or will have left behind it sad and abiding evidences of its tremendous power. We should reserve it for a time of need, when like Sampson, wronged by his enemies past all endurance, he might wisely seek their destruction, even though it cost him his life."

[46] The Charlotte *Hornet's Nest,* June 29, stated that Caldwell did not attend because of sickness and that the other representative was forced to remain in the state to attend to important business.

[47] June 29, 1850. The following states were represented at Nashville: Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, and Tennessee.

. . . judiciously addressed to the cool reflection, and not to the heated passions of the Southern people."[48] The *Raleigh Register,* on the other hand, made the following comment: "The Nashville Convention has thus had its say and adjourned. Its inception was unwise and iniquitous—its deliberations did not excuse the error of its calling—and it can only be remembered, as its prototype—*the Hartford Convention*—is remembered, to be condemned and deprecated."[49]

It was hoped by the advocates of the Convention that North Carolina would be represented should the Convention reassemble. Maxcy Gregg, prominent secessionist of Columbia, South Carolina, was in communication with political leaders in North Carolina and urged them to assure the representation of the state in the next meeting. On August 21, he wrote to John F. Hoke, prominent Democrat of Lincoln County, as follows: "Let me beg you also to use your efforts towards sending a representation from your Congressional District & State to the Convention when it reassembles. North Carolina ought not to be unrepresented in a meeting which will probably be fully attended on behalf of most of the Southern States."[50] On September 25, he again wrote to Hoke inquiring how many districts in North Carolina had appointed delegates to the next Southern Convention and urging Hoke to "do something by correspondence beyond your own Congressional District, towards stirring the people up to send Delegates to the Southern Convention."[51]

A Southern Rights meeting, held in Mecklenburg County, in October, elected two delegates and adopted a resolution declaring that "the States composing the federal Union are free and independent sovereignties."[52] This, however, was but an isolated case. The adoption of the compromise measures had

[48] July 13, 1850.

[49] June 26, 1850.

[50] Chief Justice Hoke Papers.

[51] *Ibid.* The author of this study has been unable to find evidences of any activity on the part of Hoke. He was, however, interested in the movement and corresponded with Gregg on the subject. On September 25, Gregg wrote Hoke, "Your letter of the 12th has given me much pleasure, & inspired me with fresh hope with regard to the good old commonwealth of North Carolina."

[52] *North Carolina Standard,* November 13, 1850.

largely checked sentiment in North Carolina for a Southern movement.

North Carolina's failure to participate in the Nashville Convention did not mean that it was indifferent to the complaints of the South, but rather that it had faith in the ability of Congress to settle the difficulties; consequenly, it looked with anxious eyes to the proceedings in Congress during the year of 1850.

The members of the North Carolina delegation in Congress, with the exception of Representatives Thomas L. Clingman, Whig of Buncombe County, A. W. Venable, Democrat of Granville, and W. S. Ashe, Democrat of New Hanover, were conservative in their views and not inclined to follow the extremists of the lower South. Clingman and Venable, and to a lesser degree Ashe, however, were decidedly pro-Southern in their speeches and in their views on the rights of the South were close associates of the fire-eaters from the cotton states.

On January 29, Henry Clay introduced a series of compromise resolutions in the Senate. While these resolutions and the bills based upon them were under consideration, several members of the North Carolina delegation addressed the Congress on the slavery question. Clingman, first to speak, delivered a fiery speech in the House, January 22. Should the Southern people submit to the exclusion of slavery from the territories, he declared,

> they would meet the scorn and contempt of the universe. The *men* of this generation, who would be responsible, ought to be whipped through their fields by their own negroes. I thank God that there is no one in my district that I think so meanly of, as to believe that he would not readily come into whatever movement might be necessary for the protection of our rights and liberty.

The South, he said, would be in a much better position economically out of the Union; it was, however, willing to remain if justice were granted. "But when we ask for justice, and to be let alone we are met by the senseless and insane cry of 'Union, Union!' Sir, I am disgusted with it. . . . We do not love you, people of the North, well enough to become your *slaves*. God

has given us the power and the will to resist." In closing, he solemnly warned the North, "Do us justice, and we continue to stand with you; attempt to trample on us, and we part company."[53] Clingman's ultra-Southern opinions gained friends for him among the pro-Southern Democrats, but incurred the enmity of the conservative Whigs.[54] While on a trip to Baltimore, a North Carolina Whig encountered "the celebrated Mr. Clingman who seemed to be full to overflowing of himself, talking as if he were another Sampson who would pull down by his individual strength the pillars that support the Union."[55]

On February 19, A. W. Venable came to the aid of the defenders of Southern Rights in a long speech in the House. He attributed the national crisis to the growing anti-slavery agitation in the North and the attacks on Southern institutions. He condemned the cry of "Union" as deceptive when at the same time the constitution was being violated and the rights of the South disregarded. The South, he maintained, was rapidly coming to believe that "we are not one people." The consequence of the attacks upon the South was "imminent danger of disunion." He concluded with the warning to the North: "Drive not an exasperated people to extremities. If you do on your heads be the guilt. I have warned you."[56]

Senator Willie P. Mangum, though not so ultra-Southern in his views as Clingman or Venable, was representative of the states' rights wing of the Whig party. In a short speech on February 6, he boldly defended the rights of the South. Like Venable and Clingman, he pointed out that it was not the South which had committed the "act of aggression." The great major-

[53] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 200 *et seq;* quoted in full in the *North Carolina Standard,* February 6, 1850.

[54] Wm. S. Pettigrew, Whig planter of Washington County, wrote James C. Johnston, March 14, 1850, as follows: " . . . Mr. Clingman has been an immensely great man among the ultras of the South & no doubt has vanity enough for fifty men. Mankind have ever admired those who urge them to their own ruin until they have reaped the fruit of bad counsels, then their advisers are execrated." Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[55] Jas. C. Johnston to Wm. S. Pettigrew, March 6, 1850, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[56] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 157-165; quoted in full in *North Carolina Standard,* March 13, 1850.

ity of the Southern people, he thought, did not believe that the federal government had any "power to touch the subject of slavery either in the States or in the Territories." Finally, he exclaimed, ". . . anything will be incurred in preference to dishonor and an ignominious submission to an imprudent, arrogant, and unconstitutional interference with our rights."[57]

With Clingman, Mangum, and Venable expressing such views on the floors of Congress, it is small wonder that one North Carolinian complained, "I fear our Representatives at Washington are too busy dissolving the Union to trouble themselves much respecting the claims . . . of humble North Carolina."[58] Lovers of the Union were coming to fear that dissolution would be the result of the endless agitation.[59]

The other members of the North Carolina delegation, however, exerted their influence on the side of compromise. Opposed to agitation, they labored to calm the troubled waters. On March 6, Edward Stanly, bitter opponent of everything that smacked of disunion, delivered a long speech in the House. This "hue and cry" about aggressions against the South, he said, could be explained by the desire of Democratic politicians to advance the fortunes of their party at the expense of the Whig administration. The North, he admitted, had acted unjustly in not surrendering fugitive slaves, but that did not furnish sufficient reason for such bitter conplaint by the Southern people over an annual loss of only $200,000. Had not the compromise tariff of 1833 "passed to gratify . . . a portion of the South sacrificed as many *millions* of dollars of northern property as the whole South ever lost in *thousands* of dollars in fugitive slaves"? Too much importance, he said, had been attached to the activities of a handful of abolitionists; the great majority of the Northern people had no desire to interfere with Southern Rights. Since North Carolina needed no outlet for surplus slaves, he saw no reason why she should object to the admission of Cal-

[57] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 300.

[58] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, March 14, 1850, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[59] Jas. C. Johnston wrote J. Johnston Pettigrew, March 5, 1850: ". . . With you I am of the opinion that our government cannot last long . . . I think if it does not shortly explode by the power of steam or inflamable gas it will sink into imbecility and die of premature old age." *Ibid.*

ifornia and New Mexico without slavery. In conclusion, he invoked "the protection of the great Jehovah" on the United States and declared in "the name of the people of North Carolina" that "this Union cannot be, shall not be, destroyed."[60]

News of Stanly's speech no sooner reached the state than the condemnations of the pro-Southern press began to fall upon his head. The New Bern *Eastern Carolina Republican* (Democratic) asserted it to be the duty of the Whigs of the district to ask him to resign his seat in Congress.[61] "He ought to be forced to return among his outraged and insulted constituents to answer for his marriage to the 'Free Dirters'" wrote the *Asheville News* (Democratic).[62] Most bitter of all in its comments was the ardently pro-Southern Charlotte *Hornet's Nest* which declared Stanly's speech "a disgrace to himself, to the party to which he belongs, to the assembly in which he delivered it, and a damning disgrace to the State from which he hails."[63]

George E. Badger, senator from North Carolina, was a member of the nationalistic wing of the Whig party and was as completely opposed to disunion schemes as was Stanly. Badger labored earnestly for compromise and on March 18 and 19 delivered a long, moderate speech in the Senate. He extolled the value of the Union and declared that the nature of American institutions made peaceable separation impossible. He then entered into a long defense of slavery, quoting the Scriptures to show its legitimacy from the Christian viewpoint. He thought that the demand of the South for an effective fugitive slave law was a just one and did not believe that the sectional disputes could be settled until that demand was met. He did not deny the constitutional power of Congress to pass the Wilmot Proviso but declared its passage would be considered by the South "an insulting exercise of power." If Congress adopted the Wilmot Proviso before the meeting of the Nashville Convention, it would mean the dissolution of the Union.

Although a defender of the institution of slavery, Badger was entirely opposed to the right of secession. "No State has

[60] *Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 336-345.
[61] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard*, March 20, 1850.
[62] Quoted in *ibid.*, June 12, 1850.
[63] Quoted in *ibid.*, April 10, 1850.

a *right* to secede from this Union" he avowed. The Union, however, could not be maintained by force and should the more powerful section conquer the weaker "the States are not in union, the constitutional connexion is not restored." Nor did he think that the passage of the Wilmot Proviso would furnish sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union. In conclusion, he urged compromise, conciliation, and cooperation.[64]

Mangum, by this time alarmed at the excited state of affairs, was also making every effort to promote compromise. In recommending the passage of the compromise measures framed by the committee of thirteen, of which he was a member, he took a conservative position. "Let us differ if we please," he said, "on this or that question of policy; but upon these questions which touch the integrity of the Union and perpetuity of the Government, and shake the solid continent to its center, I can have but one heart, one will, one mind; and that is to do justice to all."[65]

The people of the state were overwhelmingly in favor of compromise and when the committee of thirteen reported its compromise program to Congress on May 8,[66] North Carolina was inclined to accept the measures. Both Whig and Democratic papers favored their acceptance.[67] The *North Carolina Standard,* however, was none too favorably disposed toward them and complained that they gave too much to the North and too little to the South.[68] Venable declared that he would resign before he would vote for them, since he considered "the Compromise bill as reported by the committee of thirteen degrading

[64] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 384-392.

[65] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 950. Badger and Mangum had considerable influence on the passage of the compromise resolutions through their influence with Webster. It was partly as a result of their urging that Webster decided to support the measures. J. G. deR. Hamilton, *Party Politics in North Carolina,* p. 137; New York *Herald,* April 13, 1852, quoted in L. F. London, The Public Career of George Edmund Badger, pp. 149-150.

[66] For the resolutions as reported by the committee of thirteen, see Rhodes, *op. cit.,* I, 172-173.

[67] The *Raleigh Register,* Raleigh *Times, Fayetteville Observer,* Whig, and the *Wilmington Journal, North Carolina Standard,* Fayetteville *North Carolinian,* and Goldsboro *Republican and Patriot,* Democratic, among others favored accepting the resolutions.

[68] May 22, 1850.

to the South and a most pusillanimous surrender of all that we claim or that the North ever demanded."[69] The *Wilmington Journal* probably gauged public opinion accurately:

> Perhaps this compromise is not all that Southern men could desire. In some respects it is not; but we believe the question is now narrowed down to this—compromise or disunion. There is no use in deceiving ourselves. . . . To sum up all, this report and the bills accompanying it will be vehemently opposed by gentlemen from the extremes of both sections; but we think that it will finally pass, and with some slight modifications, will be, if not acceptable, at least acquiesced in by the people of the country.[70]

The vote of the North Carolina delegation in Congress on the compromise was for the most part pro-Southern. In the Senate, Badger and Mangum opposed the abolition of the domestic slave trade in the District of Columbia and failed to vote on the admission of California.[71] Both supported the New Mexican territorial bill and the fugitive slave law.[72] Badger voted affirmatively on the Texas boundary settlement and Mangum was paired with no indication of his preference.[73] In the House, the North Carolina members gave a majority of their votes for all the provisions except the admission of California and the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Only Edward Stanly, federal Whig, and Joseph P. Caldwell, Whig of the western county of Iredell, voted in favor of the admission of California, and not a single North Carolina representative voted affirmatively on the abolition of the slave trade.[74] On the Utah, Texas boundary, New Mexico, and fugitive slave provisions the majority was in the affirmative.[75] The pro-Southern members, including Clingman, Daniel, and Venable, cast their votes against the Texas boundary settlement and the New Mexican bill which were joined together.[76] Every member, except Clingman who failed to vote, favored the Utah measure.[77]

[69] A. W. Venable to the editor of the *Granville Whig*, June 21, 1850, Thomas M. Pittman Collection.
[70] May 17, 1850.
[71] *Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1830, 1555.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 1589, 1660.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 1573.
[74] *Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1772.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 1764, 1776.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 1764.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 1776.

The votes in the House indicate that the Whig members, with the exception of the pro-Southern Clingman, were disposed toward compromise, whereas the Democratic members, Ashe, Daniel, and Venable, as well as Clingman, all pro-Southern in their views, were opposed to most of the provisions.[78] The votes indicate that the non-slaveholding West (exclusive of Clingman's district) and part of the extreme East (Stanly's district and the northeast, an old Federalist stronghold) favored the Compromise and that the eastern slaveholding area, running from Granville and Northampton counties on the north to New Hanover and Brunswick on the south, was opposed to most of its provisions.[79]

[78] Speaking in the House, June 25, 1852, Ashe said: ". . . I hesitated not, during the last Congress, to throw myself in opposition to what has been misnamed the compromise measures. . . . So hostile I deemed these measures to the constitutional rights of the several States composing this Confederacy; so unjust, oppressive, and insulting, to the people I represent, that if I know myself I would rather have seen the roof of this noble Hall fall, and in its fall crush every member of that Congress, than that they should have become the laws of the land." *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, p. 748.

[79] See map in Garrison, *Westward Extension*, p. 328.

CHAPTER V

THE FINALITY OF THE COMPROMISE

After the passage of the Compromise, most North Carolinians seemed ready to accept its provisions as a settlement of the sectional troubles. The pro-Southern wing of the Democratic party, led by the *North Carolina Standard*, though forced to acquiesce in the settlement, made no attempt to conceal its dissatisfaction. The New Bern *Eastern Carolina Republican* warned that the South would not submit to any further agitation of the slavery question and would not "make any farther [*sic*] concessions for the sake of the Union."[1] On September 25, the *North Carolina Standard* gave vent to its contempt for the Compromise:

> The South has been vanquished in the struggle. Slavery has at last been circumscribed—the slave-trade has been abolished in the District—the Mexican law is relied upon to exclude us from the Territories, until such time as States can be manufactured, as California was—Texas is called upon to yield fifty thousand square miles more of slave soil, for a consideration or be expelled from her own territories by Federal bayonets; and thus, as the circle of fire approaches us on all sides, red with the wrath of Fanaticism born in hell, we are commanded on pain of treason to be silent.

A Southern Rights meeting in Charlotte, October 29, condemned the compromise measures and adopted a resolution declaring the states of the Union "free and independent sovereignties."[2] On the same day, a Southern Rights meeting held in Wilmington likewise signified its hostility to the Compromise and expressed its thanks to Ashe, Clingman, Daniel, and Venable for upholding the rights of the South.[3]

[1] September 11, 1850.
[2] *North Carolina Standard*, November 13, 1850.
[3] *Tarborough Press*, November 9, 1850.

The great majority of the people was more tolerant of the settlement. A meeting in Rockingham County, November 27, at which Stephen A. Douglas was present, pledged its support of the Compromise and deprecated the efforts of extremists, North and South, to destroy the Union.[4] The Whigs were especially vocal in their approval, holding numerous meetings in various parts of the state, at which they adopted resolutions professing their gratification at the settlement.[5]

Although there was some disagreement over the Compromise as a whole, there was virtual unanimity in North Carolina as well as throughout the South on the fugitive slave law. Whigs and Democrats, conservatives and Southern extremists, were in agreement that the fugitive slave law must be enforced. The *Raleigh Register* declared, "We do not hesitate to say that in the event of the continued nullification, or the repeal of the Fugitive Slave law, the Union *ought not* to stand."[6] The Salisbury *Carolina Watchman* (Whig) threatened "The Fugitive Slave Law must be executed, or we are ready to sever every tie that binds this Union."[7] The Wilmington *Commercial* took cognizance of the fact that seventy-five of the one hundred and six representatives from the non-slaveholding states had opposed the fugitive slave bill and thought that the South should take a stand on two points: that Congress has no power to prohibit or establish slavery in the states or the territories; and that secession for cause is a positive right of the several states.[8] Even conservative Whigs feared the consequences of a failure of the North to enforce the fugitive slave act.[9]

More extreme and more threatening in its statements was that faction which acquiesced in the Compromise only through the force of public opinion. The Charlotte *Hornet's Nest and True Southron* (no longer affiliated with the Whigs) wrote, "If the 'Fugitive slave bill' is repealed or nullified, disunion is inevitable. That it will be repealed is almost certain—that it has

[4] *North Carolina Standard,* December 11, 1850.
[5] *Raleigh Register,* October 2, 30, December 28, 1850.
[6] November 13, 1850. [7] November 14, 1850.
[8] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* September 25, 1850.
[9] William A. Graham to C. W. Stetson, December 21, 1850, William A. Graham Papers.

been in a great measure nullified in several instances is beyond a doubt."[10] The *North Carolina Standard* warned the free states to "Let this question of Slavery alone—take it out and keep it out of Congress; and respect and enforce the Fugitive Slave Law as it stands. If not, WE LEAVE YOU! Before God and man . . . if you fail in this simple act of justice, THE BONDS WILL BE DISSOLVED!"[11] Unquestionably, the majority of each party felt that a faithful execution of the fugitive slave law was necessary to the perpetuity of the Union. This was virtually the same position taken by the Georgia Convention of 1850 as expressed in the "Georgia Platform."

Governor Manly's message to the legislature in November, 1850, expressed clearly the attitude of the state toward the sectional disturbances. He declared that North Carolina rejoiced "at the amicable settlement of this distracting controversy," but let it be known that North Carolina's "deep and abiding devotion" to the Union would not make it insensible to its rights, which rights it would never surrender.[12]

Before the legislature convened in November, it had been urged to express "boldly and fearlessly" the rights of the state.[13] In view of the excitement which prevailed throughout the South during 1850, the pro-Southern element expected the legislature to reveal to the other states of the Union the views of North Carolina on Southern Rights. The legislature had no sooner organized than William B. Shepard of Pasquotank introduced in the Senate, November 23, a series of strong pro-Southern resolutions which declared: 1. the Constitution of the United States is a compromise of conflicting interests and when it fails to secure the objects for which it was created it "becomes the creature of the whim and caprice of a dominant majority"; 2. "That although we love the Union of the States . . . we nevertheless regard the right to secede from it as a right . . . which the people of North Carolina have never surrendered . . . and

[10] November 23, 1850; see also November 9, 1850. The *Hornet's Nest* became the *Hornet's Nest and True Southron* in the latter part of 1850.

[11] November 13, 1850; see also the files of *North Carolina Standard*, October-December, 1850, for a vigorous assertion of that attitude.

[12] *House Journal 1850-1851*, pp. 461-464.

[13] Resolution of a Southern Rights meeting, Sampson County, November 19, *North Carolina Standard*, December 4, 1850.

that whenever a majority of the people of North Carolina shall solemnly resolve that they cannot safely remain in the Union, . . . it is their duty to secede, and to punish such of her citizens as refuse submission to her will as rebels and traitors"; 3. secession is an extreme remedy not to be resorted to unless all means of preserving the Union have been exhausted; 4. the repeal or alteration of the fugitive slave law will result in a consideration by North Carolina as to whether it will submit or resist the encroachments of the government; 5. it is the duty of the general government to protect and defend slave property; 6. and the federal government should protect slavery in the territories or divide the territory equally between the slave and free states.[14] Shepard made a forceful speech in support of his resolutions in which he upheld the doctrine of state sovereignty.[15]

On November 27, John A. Gilmer, a conservative Whig of Guilford County, introduced in the Senate a series of resolutions more moderate than those of Shepard. These declared: 1. the people of North Carolina cherish the Union and would consent to its dissolution only upon "extreme necessity"; 2. the repeal, alteration, or failure to execute the fugitive slave law would make the "maintainance of the Union very difficult, if not impossible"; 3. and whenever actual necessity demanded, North Carolina would resort to extra-constitutional means and protect its rights and honor "out of the Union."[16] These resolutions, though strongly Southern, were indefinite, and since they did not expressly acknowledge the right of secession were more in harmony with Whig views. In support of his resolutions, Gilmer held that an individual state could not alter the constitution and that secession was unconstitutional. Secession, if attempted, he said, would be followed by war and those who re-

[14] *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* pp. 27-28.

[15] *North Carolina Standard,* December 18, 1850. Shepard traced the attitudes of leading American statesmen toward the nature of the Union. Livingston, Jackson's secretary of state, he declared, had held that a state might resort to a withdrawal from the Union in order to protect its citizens against unconstitutional abuses by the federal government. He quoted James Madison, father of the Constitution, as saying, in the case of Ramsay *vs.* Smith, *"There was distinction between that primary allegiance we owe that particular society of which we are members, and the secondary allegiance we owe to the sovereign established by that society."*

[16] *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* pp. 27- 28.

sisted the federal government would be guilty of rebellion. In cases of extreme oppression it was the right and duty of a state to resort to revolution. Nor did he think secession, if peaceably effected, would prove a panacea for the complaints of the South. The wise policy for the Southern states to follow, he advised, was to remain in the Union as long as conditions were bearable.[17]

On the following day, Andrew Joyner, Whig of Halifax, introduced in the Senate a series of slavery resolutions which declared: 1. that the Compromise, if faithfully observed, would meet the approval of North Carolina; 2. that repeal or modification of the fugitive slave law would justify united action on the part of the Southern states; 3. and that when the wrongs of a government become unbearable there is a natural right of a people to overthrow such a government.[18] These resolutions, likewise, were in keeping with the Whig doctrine that the proper remedy to insufferable oppression was resort to the right of revolution. The three sets of resolutions were referred to a Joint Select Committee on Negro Slavery.

Several sets of resolutions on the slavery question, most of them strongly Southern, were also introduced in the House of Commons. All of them were referred to the Joint Select Committee. On December 10, the majority resolutions of the Joint Committee were reported to the Senate by N. W. Woodfin,[19] Whig of Buncombe, and to the House by R. M. Saunders,[20] Democrat of Wake. These resolutions declared: 1. that it is the duty of the South to acquiesce in the compromise measures as long as they are enforced; 2. that the failure of federal authorities to enforce the fugitive slave law will weaken the ties which bind together the states of the Union; 3. that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the abolition of the interstate slave trade, the refusal to admit a state because of slavery, or the modification of the fugitive slave act would justify the united opposition of the Southern states to uphold their rights;

[17] *Raleigh Register,* December 25, 1850.
[18] *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* p. 44.
[19] *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* pp. 87-88.
[20] *House Journal 1850-1851,* p. 602.

4. that should any of the above acts take place the governor is required to convene the legislature to consider measures of redress; 5. and that an ad valorem tax be placed on imports from the non-slaveholding states if the fugitive slave act is not faithfully executed.

On the following day, minority resolutions from the Joint Committee were reported to the Senate by Henry T. Clarke,[21] Democrat of Edgecombe, and to the House by W. W. Avery,[22] Democrat of Burke. The minority report declared: 1. that the Constitution of the United States is a compact between sovereign states; 2. and that North Carolina has the right to secede whenever a majority of its people in convention assembled decide that such action is necessary to maintain its rights.

The introduction of so many strong Southern resolutions had by this time begun to alarm the conservative Whigs. A resident of Raleigh informed William A. Graham, December 11, that "there is more of the ultra feeling on the Southern questions than I expected, but as yet there has been no test question."[23] Leading conservatives were determined to make every effort to forestall any expression of extreme sentiments by the legislature. In December, William A. Graham addressed letters to several conservative members of the legislature, including Andrew Joyner, John A. Gilmer, and N. W. Woodfin, in which he advised that it would be "extremely impolitic" to avow the doctrine of secession at that time and urged them to prevent the adoption of extreme resolutions by the legislature. Henry W. Miller, Whig of Wake County, expressed similar views, and B. F. Moore, prominent Whig of Raleigh, addressed a letter to the "Members of the Legislature," "reprobating any State action by taxes & retaliation."[24] President Fillmore's annual

[21] *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* pp. 91-92. The minority report was signed by Henry T. Clarke, W. B. Shepard, G. W. Caldwell, W. W. Avery, S. J. Person, M. Erwin, S. N. Stowe, and W. J. Blow, representing the counties of Edgecombe, Pasquotank, Mecklenburg, Burke, Moore, Buncombe, Lincoln, and Pitt, respectively.

[22] *House Journal 1850-1851,* pp. 602 *et seq.*

[23] C. L. Hinton to W. A. Graham, December 11, 1850, William A. Graham Papers; see also Willie P. Mangum to Mrs. Willie P. Mangum, November 30, 1850, Willie P. Mangum Papers.

[24] B. F. Moore to W. A. Graham, December 18, 1850, William A. Graham Papers.

message of December, 1850, which assured Congress that he would rigidly execute the laws, greatly strengthened the position of the conservatives in the legislature.[25]

Meanwhile, debate on the various sets of resolutions continued in both the House and Senate. The majority of the Whigs and a group of western Democrats were opposed to the adoption of resolutions expressing secession views, whereas the majority of the Democrats and several states' rights Whigs insisted upon the legislature taking a strong Southern stand. John H. Haughton, Whig of Chatham, in a speech in the Senate, December 17, revealed clearly the views of the former group. He opposed any expression of the rights of secession, but declared that if the fugitive slave law were repealed or modified, North Carolina ought to resist, and in such an event he would ga as far as any in maintaining the rights of the state.[26] This group, however, was unalterably opposed to the adoption of secession resolutions, taking the view that there was no necessity for such action. Since the sectional troubles had been settled for the time being by the Compromise of 1850, this group saw no reason for taking a stand until the issue was again presented.[27] Other members active in upholding this view were the Whigs, N. W. Woodfin of Buncombe, Andrew Joyner of Halifax, and John A. Gilmer of Guilford in the Senate, and R. M. Saunders, Democrat of Wake, and Kenneth Rayner, Whig of Hertford, in the House.[28]

The Inaugural Address of Governor Reid, January 1, 1851, gave encouragement to the pro-Southern faction in the legislature. He spoke out plainly and firmly on the slavery question, charging the abolitionists and fanatics of the North with producing the crisis in national affairs. "A solemn sense of public duty," he said, "impels me to declare, that the encroachments of the North on the domestic institutions of the South, have already proceeded to the farthest allowable point." In view of

[25] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 2; John M. Morehead to W. A. Graham, December 28, 1850, William A. Graham Papers.

[26] *North Carolina Standard,* December 18, 1850.

[27] John H. Haughton, Application for Pardon.

[28] See *Journals of the Legislature, 1850-1851, passim.*

the circumstances, he recommended that the legislature provide for taking the steps necessary to maintain the Constitution of the United States and the rights of the state in case the contingency should arise.[29]

Already leaders of the ultra-Southern faction of the Democratic party were prodding the legislature to action. On December 20, 1850, William S. Ashe, Democratic member of Congress from the New Hanover district, urged Thomas D. McDowell, Democratic member of the House of Commons from Bladen, to make every effort to get the legislature to take a firm and decided stand. "Resolutions are empty and idle," he wrote, "unless they avow and establish a principle. Politicians may twaddle as much as they like but unless some resource for protection is acknowledged to assist . . . the sovereign States to shield themselves from wanton violations of the Federal compact, the destiny of the South is made up and sealed. That resource is the right of secession."[30] During January and February, Walter F. Leake, of Richmond County, under the pen name "Pedee," wrote a series of letters in the *North Carolina Standard* addressed "To the Legislature of North Carolina" urging it to take the position that should the fugitive slave law not be enforced "North Carolina shall take immediate steps to secede from the Union and dissolve the bonds . . . that made us one people."[31] Other writers expressed similar views and called upon the legislature to make it clear to the North that "the Fugitive Slave Bill must be executed in good faith, or this once glorious Union . . . will be among the things that were."[32]

[29] *North Carolina Standard,* January 8, 1851. The message does not appear in the *House and Senate Documents, 1850-1851,* or in the *Journals of the Senate and House of Commons, 1850-1851.*

[30] McDowell Papers. He wrote that "the temper of the House of Representatives is decidedly more pacific than heretofore. In the first place, the North feels satisfied . . . and in the next place the hostile feeling of the South cannot be longer trifled with. Resolutions of the character of Irwin's will do much to bring them to their senses. Without leading to open practical dissolution, they enable us to assume such a position as will put them at defiance."

[31] *North Carolina Standard,* January 1, 1851.

[32] Abram Rencher to R. M. Saunders, December 5, 1850, *North Carolina Standard,* January 8, 1851.

The *North Carolina Standard* reminded the legislature that "the eyes of thousands are upon you and every ear is strained to catch your proceedings on this vital question."[33]

In January, a vote on the resolutions was finally taken. On January 8, the minority report of the Joint Committee was taken up in the Senate. The first resolution, which declared that the Constitution of the United States is a compact between sovereign states, passed on the first reading by a vote of 27 to 20. The second resolution, which asserted the right of North Carolina to secede from the Union, met determined opposition. It was defeated by a vote of 31 (21 Whigs and 10 Democrats) to 16 (14 Democrats and 2 Whigs).[34]

Much time was consumed in an attempt to agree on satisfactory resolutions, but to no avail. Apparently, there was nothing like unanimity of opinion on strong slavery resolutions and consequently none was passed. The situation was similar in the House of Commons. Resolutions and counter resolutions were introduced in December and January, but there was not sufficient unanimity of opinion to enable any of them to pass.[35] Undoubtedly, many of the Democrats were wary of adopting secession resolutions at that time, probably because they saw no necessity for action and because they feared the people would not sustain them in such a radical stand.[36] On the other hand, the Whig minority was unable to gain sufficient Dem-

[33] January 15, 1851. "The people are ahead of you on this question," it stated, ". . . *they* are looking these dangers in the face, and their commands on you to do the same are imperative and not to be evaded. 'Now's the day, and *now's* the hour.'"

[34] *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* p. 211. The Democratic opposition came from the following counties: Stokes, Forsyth, Orange, Alamance, Ashe, Surry, Watauga, Cumberland, Person, Northampton, Caswell, Brunswick, Bladen, Columbus, Granville, and Franklin. These counties are grouped in the northwest, the north central, and the southeast (Brunswick, Bladen, and Columbus) sections of the state.

[35] *Journal of the Legislature, 1850-1851, passim.*

[36] John H. Bryan to James W. Bryan, December 10, 1850, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill. B. F. Moore in a letter to Wm. A. Graham, December 18, 1850, judged the state of opinion quite accurately when he wrote: "I do not believe that any of the movers [of the resolutions] think there is any great & pressing necessity, for action or any likelihood of real utility to the repose of the country springing out of the movements. They are easy methods of getting notice abroad, and fulfilling the expectations that they are to do something." William A. Graham Papers.

ocratic support to pass the resolutions endorsing the Compromise of 1850.

Although the legislature did not commit itself on the right of a state to secede from the Union, the pro-Southern press in the state was not so reticent. Throughout 1850-1851, the Democratic press maintained the right of secession. The *Standard* insisted that just as no state could have been forced into the Union, likewise no state could be prevented from going out.[37] Other Democratic papers, notably the Goldsboro *Republican and Patriot*, the *Lincoln Courier*, and the *Wilmington Journal*, also upheld the right of secession even though opposed to its exercise at that time.[38] Among the Whig press, the Wilmington *Commercial* was most vocal in its support of the doctrine. It repeatedly declared the right of secession "the best means of preserving the Union, and the only means of preventing a civil war," since the rights of the South could not be safely left to Congress.[39] It was the view of the *Milton Chronicle* (Whig) that "the States came into the Union by a voluntary act, and . . . by a voluntary act they can go out of it."[40] The great majority of the Whig press, however, bitterly assailed the doctrine of secession. The Fayetteville *North Carolina Argus* regarded "the States as being almost as closely allied to each other as are the trunk, body and limbs of the human system."[41] The *Fayetteville Observer*, the Washington *North State Whig*, the *Raleigh Register*, and the *Newbernian* also denounced the doctrine of secession as "absurd" and "dangerous and destructive to the Union." The Whig press regarded the acknowledgment of the right of secession as the prelude to the exercise of the right.[42]

[37] December 4, 1850.
[38] *North Carolina Standard*, June 14, July 12, 1851.
[39] Quoted in *ibid.*, June 18, 21, August 6, 1851.
[40] Quoted in *ibid.*, December 25, 1850.
[41] March 2, 1850.
[42] *Raleigh Register*, July 23, 1851. The *Newbernian* states: "Did you never hear of the 'Pilot Snake,' a subtle, shining, cunning, insidious, crawling, sneaking, cowardly reptile, that always goes before, and leads the more fatal and deadly rattle-snake?—When you see the one, you may be certain the other is hard by. Secession is the sneaking pilot-snake, that is leading the infernal rattlesnake, Disunion, into the Eden of our Union." Quoted in *ibid.*, July 23, 1851.

The ultra-Southern element of the Democratic party was not inclined to abandon its defense of Southern Rights even though the sectional conflict had presumably been settled by the Compromise of 1850. The Charlotte *Hornet's Nest and True Southron* declared that the interests and the institutions of the South were now "in helpless dependence upon Northern majorities." "Will not the establishment of a Southern Confederacy . . . relieve the South from this false and dangerous situation?" it asked.[43] This paper was the most radical one in the state, taking the position that secession was not only a right but that it was "immediately expedient."[44] William W. Holden, editor of the *North Carolina Standard,* expressed the opinion privately that "nothing but the providence of God" would be able to save the Union.[45]

An attempt was made to form Southern Rights associations in various parts of the state. In Chapel Hill, several meetings were held, speeches delivered, and resolutions advocating the right of secession adopted.[46] Generally, these efforts did not receive enthusiastic support from the people.[47] South Carolina disunionists continued to urge their friends in North Carolina to prepare the state for participation in the Southern movement.[48] The Democratic press had little hope for the protection of Southern institutions in the Union. Almost without exception, however, the Democratic newspapers denied that they were disunionists *per se;* they insisted that they favored a constitutional Union but would regard the Union without the Constitution "as a curse instead of a blessing."[49] The *Tarborough Press* was sympathetic with the Southern Rights movement in South Carolina,[50] and the Raleigh *Southern Advocate* (nonpolitical) favored the Union "as laid down by the framers of

[43] November 9, 1850.

[44] Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* March 5, 1851.

[45] Holden to David S. Reid, December 1, 1850, David S. Reid Papers, III, 1850-1856.

[46] John K. Ruffin to Judge Thomas Ruffin, February 9, 1851, Hamilton, ed., *Ruffin Papers,* II, 307.

[47] J. B. Slade to his sister, February 9, 1851, Slade Collection.

[48] Maxcy Gregg to John F. Hoke, March 7, 1851, Chief Justice Hoke Papers.

[49] *North Carolina Standard,* June 21, 1851.

[50] May 24, 31, 1851.

the Constitution—short of that, the name of the Union is but the hull, destitute of the kernel."[51]

The pro-Southern element of the population had been hostile to the Compromise of 1850 and had accepted it only when coerced by public opinion. Consequently, throughout 1851 its leaders made it clear that they had acquiesced in the settlement upon the condition that it be faithfully executed. James B. Shepard, prominent pro-slavery Democrat, in a public letter of June 2, 1851, summarized this view as follows: "Under the guise of 'compromise' we have had aggression; instead of receiving justice, we have been compelled to submit to wrong; and after having made concession upon concession for the sake of the Union, we are still as far as ever . . . from the enjoyment of that repose and that quiet for which these concessions were made."[52] The Democratic press warned that if the Northern states did not repeal their personal liberty laws and cease agitating slavery in Congress, the days of the Union were numbered.[53] The *Hornet's Nest and True Southron* asserted that the Democrats were in favor of secession should the fugitive slave law be repealed.[54] The *North Carolina Standard* wrote that if the fugitive slave law were repealed "millions of Southern men will go about dissolving this Union as in the performance of a sacred duty."[55] D. K. McRae, Democrat, in a speech at Wilmington, September 10, took a similar position.[56] The *Milton Chronicle* (Whig) likewise thought it the duty of the

[51] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* July 16, 1851.

[52] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* June 14, 1851.

[53] *Ibid.,* May 24, 1851. *"One year hence,"* it declared, *"will be too late.* The thunderbolts, which are to burn through this golden chain of sovereignties, have already been forged; the hand which would stay them must be put forth now!"

[54] May 3, 1851. J. L. Badger (not to be confused with George E. Badger, Whig) editor of the *Hornet's Nest and True Southron* was perhaps the most active of the pro-Southern editors in the state. In May, he attended the Charleston Southern Rights Convention and as reported by the *Charleston Courier,* "advocated separate State action, and assured the Convention that the moment South Carolina acted, she would touch a chord in the hearts of the young men of North Carolina, that would bring them from the mountains to the seaboard, to her aid." Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* May 17, 1851.

[55] May 3, 1851.

[56] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* September 17, 1851.

South to secede if the free states continued to refuse to enforce the fugitive slave law.[57] William S. Pettigrew, a conservative Whig and lover of the Union, reached the conclusion that "unless the Fugitive Slave Bill be enforced, . . . we of the South will be driven, although reluctantly it may be, into an advocacy of disunion with all its horrors."[58]

During the early months of 1851, Whig meetings, held throughout the state, endorsed the compromise settlement.[59] The great majority of the meetings, however, made it clear that the repeal or modification of the fugitive slave law would be "an act of gross injustice to the South,"[60] and that its faithful execution was necessary to the perpetuity of the Union.[61] A meeting of citizens of both parties held in Surry County, February 11, and addressed by such conservative Whigs as John A. Gilmer and Nathaniel Boyden, adopted resolutions which declared that any material modification of the fugitive slave act would so alarm the slave states that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the Union.[62] For the most part, these meetings failed to take notice of the question of secession, being content with an endorsement of the Compromise of 1850 and an insistence on the faithful execution of the fugitive slave law.

On the other hand, the most conservative of the Whigs denounced those of the South who continued to agitate the slavery question. They took the view that the South had gained a triumph in the fugitive slave act and should be content to let the slavery question sleep so long as the compromise measures were enforced.[63] This point of view was strengthened by reports from Washington that the agitation of slavery would not be revived in Congress.[64] The Whigs were especially bitter against that faction in the South which refused to support the Compro-

[57] Quoted in *ibid.*, November 8, 1851.

[58] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, December 12, 1850, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[59] See the resolutions of these meetings in *Raleigh Register,* February-June, 1851.

[60] *Ibid.,* April 30, 1851. [61] *Ibid.,* March 26, 1851.

[62] *Raleigh Register,* February 22, 1851.

[63] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, February 27, 1851, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[64] David Outlaw to Jos. B. Roulhac, February 10, 1851, Ruffin-Roulhac-Hamilton Papers.

mise wholeheartedly.[65] The *Raleigh Register* denounced all who would have North Carolina join "the mad and treasonable schemes of South Carolina."[66] It charged that the disunionists, led by prominent members of the Democratic party, were plotting to take North Carolina out of the Union and form a Southern confederacy.[67] The policy of the secessionists, wrote the *Register,* "is to envelope themselves in a cloud, to wrap around themselves the garment of equivocation, to deal in sophistry and logical refinements, to hug the treason but denounce the traitor! THEIR REAL DESIGN IS TO BREAK UP THIS UNION, DESTROY THIS REPUBLIC!"[68]

In the congressional campaign of 1851, the Compromise of 1850 and the doctrine of secession were thoroughly discussed. The strategy of the Whig press during the campaign was to declare the issue to be that of Union or disunion and to charge the Democrats with designs to bring about secession. The *Raleigh Register* sounded the keynote of the campaign for the Union in the following statement: "Much of [the work of the secession Democrats] has been carried on in secret . . . but sufficient has reached the public eye, to convince any one, that there is on foot a nefarious plot to chain our State to the car of Disunion. . . . Union and Disunion that is virtually now and will soon be practically the issue here!"[69] The remainder of the Whig press echoed this charge and called upon the people to repudiate the advocates of disunion. The *Greensborough Patriot* urged "the honest and true people" to "crush and scatter the disunionists."[70] The Salisbury *Carolina Watchman* took a similar position.[71] Edward J. Hale, editor of the conservative *Fayetteville Observer,* denounced the doctrine of secession through-

[65] Wm. A. Graham wrote John H. Bryan, June 18, 1851, as follows: "When one set of men at the south denounce the Compromise, as an aggression, and another set, less bold, pretend to give it a reluctant acquiescence, but affect to believe that the administration is not maintaining it, in good faith, I look upon both, as the worst practical enemies of the slaveholder, and doing more to weaken the tenure of his property, than all Northern abolitionists ever can, or will do. . . ." John H. Bryan Papers, Durham.

[66] June 18, 1851.

[67] May 28, 31, June 18, 1851.

[68] June 14, 1851.

[69] June 18, 1851.

[70] Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* March 15, 1851.

[71] August 14, 1851.

out the entire campaign. Secession, he wrote, was "a great political humbug"; the only way by which the federal government could be destroyed was by an act of revolution; no state had a right to secede regardless of whether the Constitution be considered as a treaty, a compact, or a confederation; moreover, if a state should refuse to perform its duties or should declare itself out of the Union, the others possessed the legal power to coerce it.[72] The *Asheville Messenger* likewise held that the "Federal Government has the power to coerce a sovereign State, or half a dozen Southern States!"[73]

Replying to such charges, the *North Carolina Standard* denied that the Democrats were agitators and disunionists, and asserted, on the contrary, that they were defenders of Southern Rights and the Union.[74] *"The cause for secession, at this time, is not sufficient,"* wrote the *Standard*.[75] The *Wilmington Journal* alleged that the Whigs were misrepresenting the advocates of the *right* of secession in calling them disunionists.[76] In the months preceding the election, Democratic meetings in several counties had expressed themselves as in favor of "the right of the people of a sovereign State to secede and peaceably withdraw from the Union."[77]

During the campaign, pressure was exerted to elect as many Unionists as possible.[78] The increasing popularity of President Fillmore in the South was of aid to the supporters of the Union.[79] Contemporaries were convinced that North Carolina was unequivocably opposed to disunion and uninterested in

[72] July 22, 29, 1851.
[73] Quoted in *Carolina Watchman*, July 24, 1851.
[74] July, 1851, *passim*. [75] July 23, 1851.
[76] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard*, July 16, 1851.
[77] A resolution of Johnston County Democrats, April 30, quoted in the *Tarborough Press*, May 24, 1851; see also resolutions of other meetings in *North Carolina Standard*, April-May, 1851.
[78] M. Burgwyn to James W. Bryan, June 3, 1851, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.
[79] John H. Bryan, prominent Whig of Raleigh, wrote W. A. Graham, May 29, 1851: "We are more & more pleased with the course of the President & he is daily growing into our favour in the South.
"His course is noble & statesmanlike, and such as a Southern Patriot can sustain." Wm. A. Graham Papers.

taking a stand on the abstract right of a state to withdraw from the Union.[80]

The election took place in the second, fourth, sixth, seventh, and ninth districts with very little controversy. In the second and fourth districts, J. P. Caldwell, federal Whig of Iredell, and James T. Morehead, Whig, were elected without opposition. J. R. J. Daniel, Democrat, defeated Henry W. Miller in the sixth.[81] In the seventh, William S. Ashe, pro-Southern Democrat, was elected without opposition, and David Outlaw, federal Whig, was unopposed in the ninth.[82]

In the fifth district (composed of Granville, Caswell, Person, Orange, and Chatham counties), the Unionists brought out Calvin Graves, "Union" Democrat, in an attempt to defeat A. W. Venable, Democrat.[83] The *Raleigh Register* and the *Hillsborough Recorder* vigorously attacked Venable as "the leader of the Disunion forces in the State" and "an open mouthed Secessionist." The *Hillsborough Recorder* informed the Unionists that they could not vote for him with any hope that he would use his efforts to perpetuate the Union.[84] Venable, speaking in Caswell County, in July, upheld the right of secession, but expressed disapproval of separate state secession, calling it "inexpedient and productive of mischief."[85] The *Raleigh Register* charged that Venable, seeing that his views were not popular with the people, changed his course in the closing weeks of the campaign and announced his acquiescence in the Compromise of 1850 and his love for the Union.[86] Since Graves made no active campaign, Venable's election was a foregone conclusion. In commenting on the result, the *Hillsborough Recorder* wrote: "The true issue was not met; and party feelings exerted so powerful an influence that it could not be fairly presented."[87] The fact that the district was safely Democratic and that Graves

[80] C. H. Wiley to W. A. Graham, April 16, 1851, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[81] Many Whigs supported Miller who made no active campaign against Daniel.

[82] *Raleigh Register,* August 13, 1851.

[83] *Ibid.,* July 12, 1851.

[84] Quoted in *ibid.,* June 4, 1851.

[85] *North Carolina Standard,* July 16, 1851.

[86] August 20, 1851.

[87] Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* August 20, 1851.

was viewed as a Whig candidate determined the result. There is no indication that the voters regarded the election as a test of Union or disunion.

In the first district (composed of the mountain counties), Thomas L. Clingman, Southern Rights Whig, was opposed by Burgess S. Gaither, Union Whig. Many Democrats, in the absence of a Democratic candidate, joined the Southern Rights Whigs in support of Clingman when urged to do so by the *North Carolina Standard*.[88] Clingman had a firm hold on his district and was a clever campaigner. A contemporary said that he was "too cunning" to face the issue squarely and was "deceiving a large portion of the voters by pretending to be for the Union & Whig policy" and insisting that he was "a stronger Union man than Gaither."[89] Gaither accused Clingman of being a secessionist and took a strong stand against the radical pro-Southern attitude of South Carolina.[90] The Southern Rights men were active in the campaign, and getting both Southern Rights and Union votes,[91] Clingman received a majority of nearly 4000 votes.[92]

In the third district,[93] the campaign was waged almost entirely on the issue of secession. The district bordered on South Carolina and the agitation and excitement were especially acute in that region.[94] Alfred Dockery, Whig incumbent, was opposed by Green W. Caldwell, Democrat. The Whigs were

[88] Newton Coleman to David S. Reid, June 25, 1851, D. S. Reid Papers, second series, I, 1850-1856.

[89] N. W. Woodfin to D. L. Swain, July 28, 1851, Walter Clark MSS.

[90] Hamilton, *Party Politics,* pp. 147-148.

[91] N. W. Woodfin, Whig of Asheville, wrote D. F. Caldwell, October 10, 1851: ". . . In this part of the country nothing but the Congressional Election could be talked about or thought of. The Disunionists lost no time in endeavoring to poison public sentiment against the Union. While they were afraid to avow the doctrine they lost no opportunity to advance indirectly every argument to mislead others in that direction. Thus they & the Locofocos [Democrats] combined carried every thing to the Devil." D. F. Caldwell Papers.

[92] *North Carolina Standard,* August 20, 1851.

[93] The third district was composed of Lincoln, Gaston, Mecklenburg, Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Montgomery, Richmond, Anson, and Moore counties.

[94] John R. Buie to W. A. Graham, June 24, 1851, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

unusually active and waged a relentless attack on the doctrine of secession and disunion.[95] The Whig press took advantage of Caldwell's well-known pro-Southern views[96] and assailed him as a secessionist. The *Raleigh Register* informed the people that Caldwell "has proclaimed and advocated the most ultra secession doctrines, doctrines which justify South Carolina, and which, if generally sanctioned, will lead to a destruction of the Union, and a subversion of the government."[97] In reply, the *North Carolina Standard* declared that Caldwell had upheld the *right* of secession, not the exercise of that right at the time, and favored supporting the Compromise of 1850 in the hope that Southern Rights could be maintained in the Union.[98] Caldwell repeatedly expressed himself as "entirely opposed to separate State action."[99]

In retaliation, the Democratic press made much of Dockery's extreme Union views. Dockery was opposed to the theory of state sovereignty and declared he would vote the president means and money to whip South Carolina back into the Union should it attempt secession.[100] The *Hornet's Nest and True Southron,* reporting Dockery's speech in Charlotte, stated that he had taken the following position: "If South Carolina should secede, he would vote the President ships of war, not only ships of war but steam-ships, not only these but gun-boats. He would

[95] Thos. S. Ashe of Anson County wrote Wm. A. Graham, June 27, 1851, as follows: "The minds of the Whigs in this part of the district are aroused to the importance of the great question at issue between the parties, and as a Party are as devoted now as ever to the constitution and the Union. South Carolina finds no sympathy in this quarter." Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[96] He had been one of the leading advocates in the state of the Nashville Convention.

[97] June 11, 1851.

[98] June 18, 1851. See also reports of debates between Dockery and Caldwell, *North Carolina Standard,* July 2, 9, 1851.

[99] John R. Buie to W. A. Graham, June 24, 1851, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[100] *North Carolina Standard,* July 9, 1851. The *Raleigh Register,* March 14, 1854, quoted the *Concord Mercury,* July 28, 1851, to the effect that this accusation was false. The *Mercury* wrote that Dockery was willing to let South Carolina go in peace, but said that the United States was entitled to collect the public revenue from that state. If South Carolina opposed this, the United States should repel force by force.

not stop here, he would go still further, he would give him all the militia of the country to *subdue* South Carolina and *coerce her* back into the Union."[101] Dockery was elected by a majority of over 1000 votes, somewhat larger than his majority in 1849.[102] The district was safely Whig, and Dockery's election was not unexpected; undoubtedly, however, Caldwell's views were unpopular in the counties of Stanly, Cabarrus, Montgomery, and Richmond, and his vote in those counties was much less than in 1849.[103]

The most heated contest occurred in the eighth district,[104] where Edward Stanly, Whig, the most active Unionist of the North Carolina delegation, was opposed by Thomas Ruffin, Southern Rights Democrat of Wayne. Stanly was probably the most bitterly disliked Whig in the North Carolina delegation by the Democrats and they were determined to defeat him if possible. Realizing this, the Union Whigs were concerned lest Stanly be defeated and made every effort to assure his re-election.[105] Stanly's position was made more precarious by the fact that he had alienated certain large states' rights Whig slaveholders in the district;[106] at least one states' rights planter actively took the stump against Stanly.[107] On the other hand, Stanly had gained considerable popularity in the coastal counties

[101] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* June 18, 1851.

[102] *Ibid.,* August 27, 1851.

[103] A contemporary wrote: "It is very difficult for a man however talented to make any head way in this section if he is in any way suspected of Disunion." John R. Buie to W. A. Graham, June 24, 1851, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[104] The eighth district was composed of the following counties: Wayne, Greene, Lenoir, Jones, Craven, Carteret, Beaufort, Pitt, Hyde, Washington, and Tyrrell.

[105] William A. Graham wrote John H. Bryan, June 18, 1851: "I feel . . . much concern for the New Bern district, and fear that the folly of some of our friends there, will seriously affect us, and perhaps throw the state into the hands of the disunionists." John H. Bryan Papers, Durham.

[106] The Pettigrews, large Whig slaveholders of Washington and Tyrrell counties, were not on very good terms with Stanly at this time. Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, June 24, 1851, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[107] J. Collins was much opposed to Stanly on states' rights grounds and debated this issue with him in the campaign. A. S. Chesson to Col. J. B. G. Roulhac, September 17, 1851, Ruffin-Roulhac-Hamilton Papers.

as a result of his efforts to procure appropriations for re-opening the inlet at Nag's Head.[108]

The Whig press conducted an effective campaign in Stanly's behalf. The *Newbernian*, the *North State Whig*, the *Goldsborough Telegraph*, the *Plymouth Villager*, the *Greensborough Patriot*, and the *Raleigh Register* centered their attacks upon the pro-Southern views of Ruffin. The *Goldsborough Telegraph* charged that he was "an avowed, open, and strong secessionist."[109] "Keep it before the people," urged the Washington *North State Whig*, "that the Democratic leaders led on the movement and discussion in favor of secession in the last legislature of North Carolina, at a time when South Carolina was threatening to secede from the Union. . . . That at this time many of the leaders of the Democratic party in North Carolina . . . continue to agitate the slavery question, and to advocate openly the doctrine of State secession."[110] *"War as the result of secession"* it warned *"is as fatal as any of the eternal purposes of God."*[111] The *Greensborough Patriot* hoped that Stanly would be "again rewarded for his courage and his sacrifices."[112]

The Democratic press marshalled all its forces into the fray against Stanly. "To anticipate any other result [than the defeat of Stanly]" wrote the *North Carolina Standard* "would be to charge the people with the most criminal indifference to their best interests and most sacred rights."[113] Early in July the Goldsboro *Republican and Patriot* sounded the keynote of the Democratic campaign:

> North Carolinians, men of the Eighth District, pause and deliberate! Will you, can you, say in your heart, that, as citizens of a free, independent State you cannot withdraw from the Union in any other way than as rebels? . . . Can you say in your own heart, that in case you withdraw from the Union under the unconstitutional acts and intolerable oppression of consolidationists and abolitionists, the Federal Government has

[108] *Raleigh Register*, July 9, 1851.
[109] Quoted in *Raleigh Register*, June 25, 1851.
[110] Quoted in A. C. Cole, *Whig Party*, p. 200.
[111] Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 198.
[112] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard*, July 2, 1851.
[113] July 16, 1851.

the right . . . to whip you into subjection? It is for you to decide this matter. On the one hand, Mr. Ruffin contends that a State has the right to withdraw from the Union as a last resort, peaceably if she can, forcibly if she must. On the other hand, Mr. Stanly contends that a State cannot secede from the Union for any cause whatever, only as rebels.[114]

The same journal pronounced the charge that Ruffin was a disunionist an "infamous falsehood" and declared that "A more notorious and wicked slander than this never dropped from the lips of malice, or flowed from the pen of sneaking hypocrisy." Then it added triumphantly that there was in Goldsboro "but one open and avowed DISUNIONIST and he will vote for Mr. Stanly."[115]

Ruffin and Stanly held discussions in various counties of the district. Stanly repeatedly pronounced the idea of separate state secession "an abominable doctrine" but admitted that the repeal of the fugitive slave law would be "a most decided aggression upon the South." Ruffin denied Stanly's charge that he was a disunionist, but acknowledged that he favored the right of a state to withdraw from the Union "for adequate cause."[116]

Stanly defeated his opponent by a majority of 269 votes, gaining majorities in every county except Wayne, Greene, and Lenoir.[117] Stanly regarded his victory as much more than a party triumph, declaring "It is a victory of the friends of the Union. It has proved that the people of this district condemn those who advocate even the 'abstract right of secession.'"[118] The Goldsboro *Republican and Patriot* took a different view of the result, declaring Stanly's election was by a strict party vote. Without doubt there is much truth in its comment that "Party

[114] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* July 16, 1851.

[115] July 24, 1851.

[116] Reports of these discussions in Goldsboro *Republican and Patriot,* July 10, 1851, and *North Carolina Standard,* July 2, 1851.

[117] *North Carolina Standard,* August 20, 1851.

[118] See Stanly's letter "to a Committee of citizens of Newbern" August 16, 1851, *Raleigh Register,* September 3, 1851. He wrote: "I sincerely believe that any candidate, an avowed advocate of secession or disunion, who would without equivocation proclaim his wish to dissolve our Union, would be driven into retirement amidst the execration of our people."

associations are too strong to be broken even when an important principle is at stake."[119] Nevertheless, the conclusion is inescapable that the people of the district either approved Stanly's strong Union position or felt that the compromise settlement was protection enough for Southern Rights.

On the face of the results throughout the state, it would certainly appear that the people of North Carolina were opposed to disunion and undoubtedly they were. Yet, the Raleigh *Star* (Whig) was probably correct in attributing the result of the election to the strength of the Whig party and not to the state of public opinion on the issues growing out of the contest between the North and the South. All the candidates, it pointed out, had been in favor of the Union "as it is" and upon that subject the members of both parties were in agreement. It did not believe many people in North Carolina favored "theoretical secession" and thought that not one in ten thousand favored "practical secession."[120]

The election showed conclusively that the people of North Carolina did not favor immediate disunion and the Whig press made much of that fact in the closing months of 1851. The *Raleigh Register,* the *Hillsborough Recorder,* and the *Newbernian* accused the *North Carolina Standard* and its editor, W. W. Holden, of "FOSTERING A SPIRIT OF DISUNION."[121] Holden, taking a cue from the results of the congressional election, changed the editorial policy of his paper. The *Standard* now hastened to deny that it favored disunion, declaring the "abstract right of secession in the last resort" one thing and an insistence upon the exercise of that right "quite another thing."[122] Moreover, he was now ready to accept the Compromise of 1850 "as a final settlement of the slavery question; and we have not nor do we now propose to disturb it."[123]

On the eve of the presidential contest of 1852, even the pro-Southern elements of the Democratic party in the state were

[119] August 21, 1851.
[120] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* August 20, 1851.
[121] *Raleigh Register,* October 22, 1851; *Newbernian,* September 2, 1851; *North Carolina Standard,* October 15, 1851.
[122] October 1, 15, 1851. [123] September 3, 1851.

willing to accept the Compromise of 1850 as a final settlement of the sectional issues.[124] County Democratic meetings in the early part of 1852 generally expressed a willingness to acquiesce in the compromise measures provided they were faithfully executed.[125] The State Democratic Convention adopted a resolution signifying its willingness to adhere to the compromise measures and insisting upon a faithful and full execution of the fugitive slave law. On the enforcement of the fugitive slave law, the resolution was emphatic; it read: "We will not support any candidate for the Presidency, who withholds a full, prompt, and explicit avowal of his approval of said law, and of his determination to enforce [it]."[126] The national Democratic platform likewise contained a resolution endorsing the compromise measures and favoring specifically the enforcement of the fugitive slave act.[127] Moreover, the Democrats in the state were led to believe that "the vast majority of the Democracy of the free States are sound upon the fugitive-slave law."[128]

The Whigs had been the leading advocates of the Compromise in the state in 1850-1851, and since that settlement had found favor with the people the party was in a position to capitalize on its stand. County Whig meetings from November, 1851, to February, 1852, generally expressed their approval of the compromise measures and insisted that they be accepted as a final settlement of the issues involved.[129] In some instances, the enforcement of the fugitive slave act was made the test of

[124] W. W. Holden wrote John W. Ellis, prominent Democrat, January 8, 1852: "Politically, things are going on handsomely. The Slavery question I regard as settled, but we have gained and will gain, in the long run, by our Southern Rights, or rather States Rights position. . . . When I say I regard the Slavery question as settled, I only mean to say that the 'Compromise' is to be regarded as a finality." Ellis Papers.

[125] Resolutions of these meetings in *North Carolina Standard,* March-April, 1852.

[126] *North Carolina Standard,* May 19, 1852.

[127] *Ibid.,* August 7, 1852.

[128] W. W. Holden to John W. Ellis, June 16, 1852, Ellis Papers.

[129] *Raleigh Register,* November 1851-February, 1852. A resolution of the Wake County Whigs declared "that the faithful observance of ALL the provisions of the Compromise are necessary for the security of our peace and the perpetuity of that Union." *Raleigh Register,* November 19, 1851.

the success of the Compromise.[130] The State Whig Convention adopted a resolution that "no candidate for the Presidency or Vice Presidency can obtain the vote of the Whig Party of North Carolina, unless he is, beyond doubt, in favor of maintaining the entire series of Compromise measures."[131]

The Compromise of 1850 was associated in the minds of the North Carolina Whigs with the Fillmore administration. Leading Whigs in the state were outspoken in their support of Fillmore for the Whig nomination in 1852.[132] Some went so far as to say that no other Whig could get North Carolina's presidential vote.[133] One contemporary wrote that "The Whigs appear indignant at the idea of superceding him with the name of any man living."[134]

Early in 1852, William A. Graham learned the intention of the Northern Whigs to nominate General Winfield Scott instead of Fillmore and to make no statement on the compromise settlement. Such a policy he realized would be ruinous to the Whig party in the South. (Yet, he accepted the vice-presidential nomination on the ticket with Scott.) Consequently, he urged the Southern Whigs to attend the National Whig Convention and insist upon the nomination of Fillmore.[135] Early in April, Edward Stanly in a published letter prepared the ground for the acceptance of Scott by the Southern Whigs. He represented Scott as a strong supporter of the Compromise and saw no reason why the support of the anti-slavery faction of the party should make the Southern Whigs suspicious of Scott.[136] A few

[130] A resolution of the Rowan County Whigs read: "We warn fanatics to *beware* and to remember that 'there is a point beyond which endurance ceases to be a virtue,' and that we especially demand that the Fugitive Slave law shall be literally executed, *without* a repetition of those murderous and treasonable hindrances which have heretofore so disgracefully marked its enforcement." *Raleigh Register,* February 11, 1852.

[131] *Raleigh Register,* May 1, 1852.

[132] Wm. A. Graham to James W. Bryan, April 5, 1852, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

[133] H. C. Jones to W. A. Graham, December 7, 1851, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[134] C. L. Hinton to W. A. Graham, April 28, 1852, *ibid.*

[135] Wm. A. Graham to James W. Bryan, March 22, 1852, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

[136] Washington *Union,* April 10, 1852, quoted in Cole, *Whig Party,* p. 231.

days later, Mangum in a speech in the Senate came out in favor of Scott.[137] This action on the part of Stanly and Mangum was not generally approved by the North Carolina Whigs.[138] The party caucus in Washington, of which Mangum was chairman, refused to adopt a resolution affirming the Compromise of 1850. This action was followed by the secession from the caucus of thirteen Southern Whigs, who drew up an address protesting the action of the caucus. David Outlaw and Thomas L. Clingman were the only North Carolina Whigs who favored the address.[139]

The nomination of Scott was not received very favorably by the Whigs in the South.[140] The leading party journals, though admitting their disappointment at the failure of the Convention to nominate Fillmore, however, hastened to assure the voters of Scott's soundness on the Compromise and of their intention to support the nominee.[141] Already, some of the leading Whigs in the state had denied that Scott was under the influence of Seward, pointing out that there was "no man in America of stronger will . . . of more enlarged national sentiments" and that he could not be the president of "a clique or faction."[142]

It was not long before disaffection in the ranks of the Whigs began to appear in the open. Thomas Loring, editor of the Wilmington *Commercial,* announced that his paper would not support Scott.[143] The *Commercial* declared that Scott was the candidate of the Seward anti-slavery Whigs, who would control him if he were elected.[144] The *Asheville News,* under the influence of Clingman, also repudiated Scott and turned to the

[137] *Cong. Globe,* 32 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 1076-1079.

[138] Wm. A. Graham to J. W. Bryan, April 17, 1852, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill; C. L. Hinton to W. A. Graham, April 28, 1852, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[139] *Raleigh Register,* April 28, 1852; this paper did not approve of the withdrawal from the convention, fearing that it would create a division in the party in the campaign.

[140] Robert B. Gilliam to W. A. Graham, July 8, 1852, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[141] *Raleigh Register,* June 23, 1852; the *Wilmington Herald* and the *Greensborough Patriot* also signified their willingness to support Scott. *Raleigh Register,* June 30, 1852.

[142] J. W. Osborne to E. J. Hale, May 29, 1852, E. J. Hale Papers.

[143] *North Carolina Standard,* June 30, 1852.

[144] *Ibid.,* August 21, 1852.

Democratic candidate.[145] Clingman announced in a public letter of October 8, that he could not support Scott and that he would support Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, the Democratic candidate.[146] Kenneth Rayner, prominent Whig of Hertford County, also deserted the Whig ticket and said publicly "that he would not walk forty yards to cast his vote for General Scott."[147] Whigs throughout the state were lukewarm toward Scott and many local political leaders refused to use their influence in his behalf.[148]

In an effort to combat this disintegrating tendency in the party, the Whig press and loyal party leaders made every effort to establish Scott's soundness on the compromise measures.[149] Graham, the vice-presidential candidate, had already advised the Whig papers to emphasize the fact that many leading Democrats in the North were abolitionists.[150]

There was little interest in the presidential election in North Carolina until the conclusion of the gubernatorial contest in August. From August to November, however, both parties began a final drive for their respective candidates. The Democrats

[145] *Ibid.*, July 10, 1852; Wilmington *Commercial*, July 13, 19, 1852.

[146] *North Carolina Standard*, October 8, 13, 1852. In his Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 337, Pegg explains Clingman's course as follows: "Clingman . . . wanted to go to the United States Senate and did not definitely and openly turn to Pierce until it became certain that the Democrats controlled the legislature of 1852." Perhaps that partly explains Clingman's action. It must be remembered, however, that Clingman had been moving steadily toward the Democratic position on slavery since 1849 and that he was ultra-Southern in his views. Early in 1853 he told his constituents that "No man can fix upon me a greater share of responsibility for General Scott's defeat than I am ready to take." *North Carolina Standard*, February 9, 1853.

[147] Letter of H. W. Miller, January 10, 1853, *Raleigh Register*, January 12, 1853.

[148] "I have heard but one Whig in the County [Brunswick] declare himself for Scott," wrote Owen D. Holmes to T. D. McDowell, July 7, 1852. "Dr. John H. Hill & Mr. Langdon the latter decidedly the most popular man of his party in the county have denounced him." C. B. Heller Collection. See also "Whig Testimony against Election of Scott," undated campaign circular; C. L. Hinton to Wm. A. Graham, July 9, 1852, Wm. A. Graham Papers; N. W. Woodfin to D. L. Swain, September 1, 1852, Walter Clark MSS.

[149] *Raleigh Register*, July-October, 1852.

[150] Wm. A. Graham to James W. Bryan, March 22, 1852, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

declared that "The *safety of Southern rights* and *the salvation of the Union* depend on the election of Pierce and King."[151] William A. Graham was very popular among the Whigs in the state and his name gained considerable support for the ticket.[152] In eastern North Carolina the Whigs held numerous mass meetings and celebrations, and Scott and Graham clubs were organized in many counties.[153] Graham wrote several letters vouching for Scott's soundness on the Compromise and declaring that Scott had been one of its most effective supporters at the time of its adoption.[154]

Neither Scott nor Pierce was very popular in the state and there was general apathy on the part of the people toward the result. As compared with the gubernatorial election in August nearly 4000 Whigs and nearly 7000 Democrats failed to cast their votes for either candidate. Pierce and King received a majority of 686 votes in the state.[155] Clingman's defection and influence in behalf of the Democratic candidates was partially responsible for the result in North Carolina. Undoubtedly, the fact that Scott was believed to be under the influence of the anti-slavery wing of the party lessened his strength among the pro-Southern Whigs. Finally, the Whigs in the state, greatly disappointed at the failure of the party to choose Fillmore, were not vitally interested in the election and cared little whether or not Scott was elected.[156] The election revealed what had been

[151] *North Carolina Standard,* October 20, 1852.

[152] C. L. Hinton to Wm. A. Graham, July 9, 1852, Wm. A. Graham Papers; N. W. Woodfin of Buncombe County wrote: "Grayham's [*sic*] name strengthens us." Woodfin to D. L. Swain, September 1, 1852, Walter Clark MSS.

[153] Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

[154] These letters appeared in *Raleigh Register,* September-October, 1852.

[155] *North Carolina Standard,* November 17, 1852. At first sight, it appears that defection was greater among the Democrats than among the Whigs. However, the vote cannot be properly compared with the gubernatorial vote since state issues were of considerable importance in the latter. Scott received 4,363 votes less than Taylor received in 1848, whereas Pierce received 4,875 votes more than Cass received in 1848.

[156] Jas. C. Johnston, Whig, wrote Wm. S. Pettigrew, who likewise did not support Scott, November 10, 1852: "The result of the Presidential election has been perfectly astounding to the Whigs in this section [northeastern part of the state]. I did not go to the election and did not

repeatedly shown since the adoption of the Compromise of 1850 —that the people of North Carolina were anxious to accept the Compromise as a final settlement of the sectional issues. North Carolina was ready to repudiate any faction which advocated disunion or refused to accept the finality of the Compromise of 1850.

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vote. I could not vote for Gen'l Scott. . . . I cannot say that I regret much the result of the canvass." Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SOUTHERN RIGHTS SENTIMENT[1]

North Carolina, having within its borders geographic regions not adaptable to the plantation system, was not so closely identified with the institution of slavery as were the states of the lower South. In the middle eastern agricultural section and in the cotton district of the south central area, the slavery system flourished and in those areas there were identity of interests and sympathy with the cotton states.[2] In the mountainous area and in the extreme east, slaveholding was exceptional. These areas never developed the sensitiveness about slavery that was characteristic of the black belts. When the anti-slavery movement gathered momentum in the fifties, the slaveholding areas of the South feared lest the interests of the agricultural slaveholding South be destroyed. The areas of North Carolina in which slaveholding was rare, however, were not so aware that there were dangers on the political horizon. Only indirectly identified with the institution of slavery, they could not be made to fear destruction of their economic interests. These areas remained largely indifferent to the Southern Rights movement and defense until secession had become an accomplished fact in the Gulf states. This absence of identity of interests between North Carolina and the other Southern states was expressed by Edward Stanly, Whig Congressman, as follows: ". . . we are invited to contemplate the glories of a Southern Confederacy, in which Virginia and *South* Carolina are to have great cities, to be supported by the colony or plantation of North Carolina."[3]

[1] Much of the supporting evidence for conclusions expressed in this chapter is stated in chapter I.

[2] See Map I for the distribution of slaves in North Carolina in 1860.

[3] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, p. 409.

Nevertheless, in spite of the sectionalism within the state, the institutions and interests of North Carolina were closely identified with those of the South. Slavery was firmly entrenched in a large area of the state. Moreover, during the fifties politics in the state was largely controlled by the Democratic party. The leaders of this party were much in accord with the policies of the more Southern element of the party. As the year 1860 approached, the defense of the institution of slavery became more and more a cardinal principle with the Southern Democrats. Consequently, although the Southern Rights movement never attained the same vitality in North Carolina that it did farther south, the arguments advanced for a defense of the rights of the South did not differ greatly from those advanced in the cotton states.

The point was repeatedly made that restriction of the extension of slavery would mean the destruction of slaveholding in the border states. Speaking in the North Carolina Senate, November 27, 1850, William B. Shepard, Whig of Pasquotank, argued that the "walling-in" policy of the federal government would mean ruination for North Carolina. In support of his argument, he said that the amount of land in North Carolina available for slave labor on a profitable basis was limited; such being the case, the natural increase in the slave population would result in a rise in land values and a fall in the value of slaves. Such a state of affairs would be injurious to slaveholders and non-slaveholders alike. The latter would find land values beyond their reach and consequently would be forced to leave the state. The slaveholders would be compelled to purchase land to employ and feed their surplus labor "until the State becomes one vast plantation, barely producing enough to sustain, in the cheapest and scantiest manner, her teeming black population."[4]

[4] *North Carolina Standard,* December 18, 1850. It is obvious that no such condition could be brought about so long as there was a market for slaves in the states farther south. His theory assumes a constant supply of land suitable to slavery and an ever increasing number of slaves. Nevertheless, the trend which he described would tend to operate in the long run, if the rate of population increase continued. Moreover, the expansion of the slavery area westward would provide a market for the slaves of the states of the upper South. The competition of the rich virgin lands of the southwest would probably mean that ultimately

Henry W. Miller, Whig of Wake, made this argument the main basis of his opposition to the Republican party. The policy of that party, he declared, was not to admit any more slave states, thereby hemming in slavery. The natural increase of slaves, he held, made it necessary that the slave area be extended or the South would be ruined. The policy of the Republican party, if attained, would inevitably mean "the ruin of the South or the dissolution of the Union."[5] The *Asheville Messenger*, Whig mountain journal, felt no such alarm at the opposition to the extension of slavery. It was of the opinion that slavery might be profitable in some states and unprofitable in others and that ultimately the slaves of each state would be confined to their own area.[6]

Aware of the great potential power of the non-slaveholding element in the state if skillfully manipulated, the slaveholders emphasized an identity of interests between slaveholders and non-slaveholders. The *North Carolina Standard* argued "that persons who own no slaves are inseparably associated either by blood, affinity, interest and business relations with those who do; and whatever contributes to weaken the power of the South in this respect, or to impair the safety and value of the institution, must fall in the end with equal force—with equal ruin upon all."[7] There was some truth in that argument. Yet, there were

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slavery would be unprofitable in the upper South. Under such a condition, the importance of an outlet for the increasing slave population of the older states of the South is obvious. On the other hand, the realization that the expansion of the plantation system resulted in competition between the new lands of the southwest and the partly exhausted lands of North Carolina made many either indifferent or opposed to the extension of slavery. Professor Charles W. Ramsdell in an article entitled "The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion" reached the conclusion that "by 1860 the institution of slavery had virtually reached its natural frontiers in the west." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVI (1929-30), 151-171. If such was true, the decline of slavery in the upper South at an early date was inescapable.

[5] *North Carolina Standard*, August 4, 1858.

[6] Quoted in *ibid.*, July 19, 1851. It is significant in this connection to note that in 1860 slaves formed less than fifteen per cent of the population of Buncombe County, in which Asheville was located.

[7] June 30, 1855. For interesting discussions of the factors which led the non-slaveholders to support the institution of slavery, see Paul H. Buck, "The Poor Whites of the Ante-Bellum South," *American His-*

in North Carolina thousands of non-slaveholders who were not entirely convinced of their interest in slavery by the arguments of the slaveholders. For the most part uneducated and without the means of obtaining publicity, the non-slaveholders generally did not express their opinions on slavery. Conspicuous exceptions were Hinton Rowan Helper of Rowan County and Daniel R. Goodloe of Franklin County.[8] In his *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It,* Helper marshalled all the facts and all the arguments he could find to "prove that slavery was heading the South toward economic destruction." Slavery, he wrote, lay at the root of "all the shame, ignorance, poverty, tyranny and imbecility of the South" and "nothing short of the complete abolition of slavery can save the South from falling into the vortex of utter ruin."[9] Helper omitted no argument, no expressions, and no condemnations which in any way tended to belittle slavery and slaveholders. According to Helper

> the causes which have impeded the progress and prosperity of the South, which have dwindled our commerce, and other similar pursuits, into the most contemptible insignificance; sunk a large majority of our people in galling poverty and ignorance, rendered a small minority conceited and tyrannical, and driven the rest away from their homes; entailed upon us a humiliating dependence on the Free States; disgraced us in the recesses of our own souls, and brought us under reproach in the eyes of all civilized and enlightened nations—may all be traced to one common source, and there find solution in the most hateful and horrible word, that was ever incorporated into the vocabulary of human economy—Slavery![10]

Nor did he spare the slaveholders. Upon them, he hurled the following indictment:

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torical Review, XXXI (1925-26), 41-54; Avery Craven, "Poor Whites and Negroes in the Ante-Bellum South," *Journal of Negro History,* XV (January, 1930), 14-25; J. D. B. DeBow, *The Interest in Slavery of the Southern Non-Slaveholder,* Charleston, 1860.

[8] For a sketch of Helper's life and an analysis of *The Impending Crisis* see H. T. Lefler, *Hinton Rowan Helper, Advocate of a White America.* For a brief account of Goodloe's life and opinions on slavery see J. S. Bassett, *Anti-Slavery Leaders in North Carolina,* pp. 47-56.

[9] Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Impending Crisis,* p. 28. Helper attributed most of the imperfections of the South to slavery, but failed to show clearly how these imperfections resulted from slavery.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 25; see also pp. 81-82.

You can goad us no further; you shall oppress us no longer. . . . Henceforth, Sirs, we are demandants, not suppliants. We demand our rights, nothing more, nothing less. It is for you to decide whether we are to have justice peaceably or by violence, for whatever consequences may follow we are determined to have it one way or the other. . . . Sirs, we would not wantonly pluck a single hair from your heads; but we have endured long, we have endured much; slaves only of the most despicable class would endure more. . . . Out of our effects you have long since overpaid yourselves for your negroes; and now, Sirs, you *must* emancipate them—speedily emancipate them, or we will emancipate them for you![11]

Helper did not, however, propose that the freed slaves be allowed to remain in the South to compete with the whites in economic pursuits. He shared the non-slaveholding whites' dislike of Negroes, whether slave or free, and advocated transporting them from the South to Africa or Central or South America. A tax of sixty dollars on each slaveholder for each slave in his possession,[12] he declared, would furnish sufficient funds to "charter all the ocean steamers, packets and clipper ships that can be had on liberal terms, and keep them constantly plying between the ports of America and Africa, until all slaves shall enjoy freedom in the land of their fathers."[13]

Although not so abusive of Southern slaveholders as Helper, Daniel R. Goodloe was no less critical of the effects of slavery upon the South. In the three pamphlets, *Inquiry into the Causes which have retarded the accumulation of wealth . . . in the Southern States,* Washington, D. C., 1846, *Is it Expedient to Introduce Slavery into Kansas?* n.p., 1854, and *The Southern Platform: or Manual of Southern Sentiment on the Subject of Slavery,* Boston, 1858, he introduced the opinions of leading Southerners of the Revolutionary Period and statistical evidence to prove that slavery had disastrous effects upon regions in which it existed. To slavery, he attributed the primary cause of the scarcity of wealth in the South.

It is impossible to say to what extent the views of Helper and Goodloe were representative of the views of the non-slaveholding whites of North Carolina and of the other Southern

[11] H. R. Helper, *The Impending Crisis,* pp. 128-129.
[12] *Ibid.,* pp. 155-156. [13] *Ibid.,* p. 183.

states. Unquestionably Helper's statement of his views was extreme; they were, however, but magnifications of the opinions of a large element in the population of North Carolina. Many of the poor whites were undoubtedly illiterate and uneducated; yet, to conclude that they were completely oblivious of the ill effects of the slavery system upon their social and economic welfare would be to attribute to them all an ignorance characteristic of only a small minority of their group. The whites of the non-slaveholding areas of North Carolina had no great love for the institution of slavery and all the propaganda and pressure that was brought to bear upon public opinion in the fifties in defense of Southern Rights failed to make them vitally concerned over the threat of the anti-slavery movement. To a large extent, this element of the population of the state remained aloof and indifferent to the Southern movement until war was imminent in 1861.

Slavery was a social as well as an economic institution. In addition to being a system of labor control, it was also a means of social adjustment. In the eyes of the whites of the South, the Negro was unfit for freedom and self-direction. Abolition of slavery, they feared, would mean a social upheaval. Upon the necessity of preserving the South as a white man's country, slaveholders and non-slaveholders were in agreement. Indeed, the racial aspect of slavery was the most important factor in maintaining a bond between slaveholders and non-slaveholders in support of the institution. The consequences of the abolition of slavery, declared the *Wilmington Journal,* would be the lowering of the white men in the South to the level of the Negro, since the Negro from his nature could not rise to the level of the whites.[14] "Do you desire the millions of negro population in the South, to be set free among us, to stalk abroad in the land, following the dictates of their own natural instincts, committing depredations, rapine, and murder upon the whites?" the *Salisbury Banner* asked its readers.[15] The South's concern for the safety of white civilization at the hands of the uncivilized blacks was manifest on the occasion of actual or threatened

[14] February 21, 1861. [15] February 19, 1861.

slave insurrections.[16] The fear for the preservation of white supremacy, however, was a real one only to the whites of the black belts. The non-slaveholding whites of the other areas seldom came into contact with the Negro. Knowing little about the Negro or slavery in practice, they did not fear the threat of the uncivilized blacks to their society to the same degree that the whites of the black belts did. The necessity for slavery as a guarantee of white supremacy and civilization was not often expressed by the people of North Carolina in defense of the institution. Nevertheless, they were always conscious of the function of slavery as a police system for the control of the blacks. In the fifties, " 'Southern rights' had come to mean racial security, self-determination by the whites whether in or out of the Union, and all things ancillary to the assured possession of these."[17]

One of the sorest spots in the relations between North and South in the ante-bellum period was the protective tariff. Predominantly agricultural, the South had by 1850 become unalterably opposed to the principle of protection. North Carolina was in accord with the rest of the South in its opposition to high tariffs. Both Whig and Democratic members of Congress from North Carolina opposed the protective tariff as injurious to the interests of the state.[18] Many North Carolina Whigs had joined their party in support of protection in the 1840's, but in the fifties when the tariff was no longer an issue in the state they were generally in accord with the Democrats in opposition to protection. In 1850 the House of Commons adopted resolutions introduced by a Whig member declaring that: 1. The attacks of the people of the North upon the institutions of the South absolved North Carolina from further obligation to the manufacturers of the non-slaveholding states by a tariff. 2. If

[16] See for example the reaction to the John Brown raid in North Carolina, *infra,* chapter VIII.

[17] Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Central Theme of Southern History," *American Historical Review,* XXXIV (1928), 35.

[18] See speeches of T. L. Clingman in the House, January 22, 1851, *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 200 *et seq.,* and February 15, 1851, *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, p. 206; also speech of A. W. Venable in the House, December 27, 1852, quoted in full in *North Carolina Standard,* January 12, 1853.

North Carolina industries needed protection, it could be "better effected by State than by Congressional Legislation." 3. The Walker Tariff was high enough and ought not to be increased. 4. The North Carolina members of Congress should oppose any increase in the tariff rates.[19] Already the North Carolina members of Congress had aided other Southern members in defeating attempts made in 1850 to increase the import duties in the interest, chiefly, of the Pennsylvania iron industry.[20] The *Raleigh Register* (Whig) expressed succinctly the attitude of North Carolina toward protection when it wrote: "Who will rally under the banner of a protective Tariff, to enrich the abolitionists of the North and East? We should like to see the Southern man who will."[21] The Democratic press was likewise opposed to protection.[22] In 1860, L. O'B. Branch, Democratic representative from North Carolina, was one of the chief opponents of the Morrill Tariff, declaring it to be a purely sectional measure that would have an ill effect upon the disturbed state of the Union.[23] Advocates of secession in 1861 said that the Morrill Tariff and the Pacific Railroad Bill would cost so much that the Union was no longer desirable for the South.[24]

The public lands were another issue on which the two sections held different views. Southern Democrats took the position that the proceeds from the sale of public lands should not be distributed among the states but should be used to lower the public debt, and thereby to make possible a reduction in the tariff duties. The view was frequently expressed that the Union gave unequal advantages to the sections because of the inequitable revenue system under which the South paid more than her

[19] *House Journal 1850-1851,* pp. 752, 774. These resolutions were adopted by votes of 105-2, 62-32, 75-18, and 84-8, respectively, with both Whigs and Democrats supporting them.

[20] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 1728, 1812, 1951; *ibid.,* 2 Sess., Appendix, p. 206, contains Clingman's explanation of the action of the North Carolina members.

[21] June 17, 1857.

[22] The *North Carolina Standard,* April 22, 1857, announced that it could not favor a revenue system in which North Carolina continually paid taxes [tariff duties] which enriched the industries of the North.

[23] J. C. Ballagh, "Tariff and Public Lands," p. 242.

[24] Speech of Thomas Ruffin in the House of Representatives, *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, p. 225; speech of Thomas Bragg, senator from North Carolina, *State Journal,* January 30, 1861,

just part into the federal treasury.[25] The Southern Democrats said that any other use of the proceeds from the sale of the public lands then as a correction of this inequitable revenue system would make "an inroad upon the constitution, fatal to its integrity—fatal to the sovereignty of the States—fatal to the peace and security of the South, and fatal, sooner or later, to the existence of the Union itself."[26]

On this issue the Southern Democrats appeared at a disadvantage and the Whigs were quick to see this. The land policy of the Democrats was to sell the public lands to settlers at a nominal fee. The Whigs repeatedly pointed out that the policy of "prudent proprietorship" of the Democratic party toward the public lands was calculated "to increase the political power of the free States, where these lands lie, thereby enabling them ultimately to acquire strength in the National Congress to trample with more impunity upon our rights, and especially those rights to our slave property."[27] The *Raleigh Register* (Whig) severely condemned the public land policy of the Democrats, which divided "the public domain . . . into territories to be settled up by Freesoilers and Abolitionists" (through the sale of lands at a nominal fee) that would come into the Union

[25] See for example the speech of Robert Strange, Democrat, at a Southern Rights meeting in Wilmington, January 19, 1850, *North Carolina Standard,* March 27, 1851. From 1790 to 1845 the federal government expended only $4,816,172 for internal improvements in the states of the South as compared with $8,783,823 in the Northern states. "This difference in appropriations was attributed to a purpose on the part of the general government to enrich one section at the expense of another." Ingle, *Southern Sidelights,* p. 107.

[26] Speech of Burton Craige, Democratic representative in Congress from North Carolina, in the congressional campaign of 1853, quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* May 21, 1853. Continuing, Craige said: "If funds raised from customs be allowed to be invested in public lands that they may be distributed among the States, the next step will be that customs will be raised for the express purpose of a like distribution; under which system the South which pays almost the whole of the customs, will be brought under a grinding and inexorable tribute to the North." Craige's argument is not very clear. By this reference to the investment in public lands of funds raised from the customs, he probably meant that the distribution of the lands would end one source of federal revenue and thereby necessitate higher import duties.

[27] A series of articles on "Distribution of the Public Lands" in the *Raleigh Register,* July, 1854. The quotation is from *ibid.,* July 8, 1854.

as free states "armed . . . to make efficient war on our property and our rights."[28] The Whigs favored the distribution among the states of either the public lands or the proceeds from their sale.

Both Whigs and Democrats in the state identified themselves with the Southern hostility to the homestead movement. Moreover, the realization that the immigrants made the representation of the North in Congress larger by increasing its population and by forming free states from the western territories constituted one of the chief bases of the strength of the Know-Nothing party in the South.[29] The *North Carolina Standard* declared that should the Homestead Bill become law the people of the free states "would pour their thousands into the territories where the South sent hundreds; and out of the strife engendered, and the blood shed, and the bitter hates made still more bitter, would rise State after State of Yankee growth, to take their places in the Senate—to vote us down upon every question affecting our vital interests, and finally to control the government absolutely and reduce us either to subjection or force us into the horrors of general civil war."[30] When the Homestead Bill was being debated in Congress in 1860, the

[28] February 24, 1858. In 1852, a resolution introduced in the House of Commons by James M. Leach, Whig of Davidson County, requesting the North Carolina congressional delegation to use its efforts to obtain an appropriation to the state of an equitable share of the public lands was adopted by the vote of 76 to 32. More than one-fourth of the Democrats joined the Whigs in its support. *House Journal 1852,* p. 269. It is significant that A. W. Venable, most ultra-Southern of the North Carolina Democratic members of Congress, repudiated the Democratic position and advocated distribution. He was bitterly condemned for this by the party journals and largely as a result of the opposition of the *North Carolina Standard* failed of reëlection in 1853. However, in the congressional campaign, both Whigs and distribution Democrats, received over 49,000 votes in a total of approximately 80,000. *Raleigh Register,* August 31, 1853. See also the *North Carolina Standard,* June-August, 1853. The *People's Press* (Salem) wrote in 1858: ". . . if it be true, that a political crisis is near at hand, (as some hopefully anticipate) and the worst should come to pass, which would throw the South altogether upon her own resources, should we not be preparing to meet the event, by securing what is justly due us, ere it be forever too late?" Quoted in the *Raleigh Register,* February 24, 1858.

[29] T. H. Leath, Know-Nothing Party in North Carolina, p. 13.

[30] April 22, 1857.

North Carolina members of Congress joined those from the other Southern states in opposition to it. It was viewed "as a blow at the extension of Southern interests into the West." Upon its passage, L. O'B. Branch declared that enacting the Homestead Bill into law was "iniquity enough for one day."[31]

As the anti-slavery movement progressed, the South looked for means of retaliation against the North. One of the most frequently mentioned means of securing a redress of grievances was the attainment of Southern economic independence. The almost complete dependence of the South upon the manufacturing industries of the North was repeatedly pointed out by the defenders of Southern Rights.[32] They warned the South against depending too completely upon the North for goods and services, insisting that the rights of the South would never be respected so long as it continued to support Northern industries in spite of anti-slavery agitation. "Peace, security, and right we will never have," wrote the *Southside Democrat,* "until we can demand them with a confidence based upon a consciousness of the ability to enforce them if they are denied."[33] One contemporary rebuked Southern economic dependence in the following words: "Shall we go on in our slavish policy until all our wealth is

[31] J. C. Ballagh, *op. cit.,* p. 242. "Of the 65 votes against the homestead bill, 53 came specifically from the South." The North Carolina members consistently opposed the bill, Branch, especially, making every effort to kill it. *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., *passim.*

[32] The best description of this dependence which the writer of the present study has been able to find is the following one taken from Helper's *Impending Crisis,* pp. 22-23: "In one way or another we are more or less subservient to the North every day of our lives. In infancy we are swaddled in Northern muslin; in childhood we are humored with Northern gewgaws; in youth we are instructed out of Northern books; at the age of maturity we sow our 'wild oats' on Northern soil; in middle-life we exhaust our wealth, energies and talents in the dishonorable vocation of entailing our dependence on our children and on our children's children, and, to the neglect of our own interests and the interests of those around us, in giving aid and succor to every department of Northern power; in the decline of life we remedy our eye-sight with Northern spectacles, and support our infirmities with Northern canes; in old age we are drugged with Northern physic; and, finally, when we die; our inanimate bodies, shrouded in Northern cambric, are stretched upon the bier, borne to the grave in a Northern carriage, entombed with a Northern spade, and memorized with a Northern slab!"

[33] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* July 22, 1857.

sapped and we become so poor as to be despised, or shall we, acting more like reasonable beings, raise our own cotton and wool, manufacture our own products and use it [*sic*] upon our own people?"[34] The remedy for this condition of affairs lay, according to the *North Carolina Standard,* in "THE DEVELOPMENT OF HER RESOURCES—AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA INDUSTRY."[35] Throughout the decade of the fifties the *Standard* urged the South to develop its resources and diversify its industries. "We must learn to live, as far as possible," it insisted, "independent of Northern fabrics, Northern commercial advantages, and Northern products. . . . As we grow weaker in the free States and in Congress we must grow stronger at home. As we decline there we must increase here, else when 'the end day' comes it will find us divided and defenseless before our enemies."[36]

One contemporary presented the following program for attaining the economic independence and development of the South. Direct trade with Europe should be established by developing a shipbuilding industry and merchant carriers. Manufacturing should be encouraged by the states through exempting the property of factories from taxation. Since the safest way to economic prosperity was by means of a diversity of economic pursuits, some of the slaves engaged in the cultivation of cotton and tobacco should be employed in the mechanical and shipbuilding industries. The development of a large direct foreign trade and a merchant marine was, in his opinion, the best way to bring the North to its senses and save the Union. The policies of the federal government were injurious to the economic interests of the South. He wrote: "The action of the government is against us, and its force accumulates, as its expenditures increase. Something must be done, and that promptly, or the Union will be dissolved." If direct trade with Europe were inaugurated and the products of slave labor withheld from the North, it would "cause the fanatic to pause, and business men to act."[37]

[34] Anonymous writer in the *Raleigh Register,* December 17, 1851.
[35] February 11, 1852. [36] May 24, 1854.
[37] A communication of one Lake Johnson to the *North Carolina Standard,* August 8, 1855.

Most of the proposals for the economic independence of the South were defensive moves. They arose largely as a result of Northern hostility to slavery and increased or diminished accordingly as that hostility became more or less manifest. To a certain extent, however, North Carolina had a positive interest in the commercial independence of the South. North Carolina, it was pointed out, would replace New England, as the source of manufactured products, in a Southern confederacy. Cognizant of this possibility, Thomas L. Clingman in a speech in Congress in 1850 seriously calculated the value of the Union. He referred to the inequalities of taxation and disbursements and declared that a Southern confederacy would raise abundant revenues with a tariff of twenty or thirty per cent. Moreover, "subjecting the goods of the North to a duty, with those from other foreign countries, would at once give a powerful stimulus to our own manufactures." The Southern states, he pointed out, possessed many advantages for cotton manufacturing, the development of which would result in "that diversity of pursuits which is most conducive to the prosperity and happiness of a people."[38]

When secession became imminent in 1860-1861, its proponents insisted that North Carolina would become one of the great manufacturing states of the South. Clingman, in describing the manufactures of North Carolina, said "The result of only ten per cent duties in excluding products from abroad, would give life and impetus to mechanical and manufacturing industry throughout the entire South."[39] In December, 1860, Samuel Hall, commissioner from Georgia to North Carolina, argued that the states of the upper South would become the manufacturing states of the Southern confederacy. "All your material interests," he said, "must be promoted by your speedy union with us in the new government. The princely treasures which have hitherto been lavished with a generous hand upon ungrateful New England, will be poured into your lap."[40]

It was believed by Southern business leaders that direct trade with Europe would aid greatly in making their section

[38] *Cong. Globe,* 31 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 200-207; see also his speech of February 15, 1851, T. L. Clingman, *Speeches and Writings,* p. 275 ff.

[39] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 4.

[40] *Journal . . . of the Convention . . . of Georgia . . . 1861,* p. 364.

economically independent of the North. The argument that the North was being enriched at the expense of the South and thereby increasing its political power was frequently made. One of the best remedies for this situation, it was claimed, was commercial independence of the North. Moreover, in any scheme for direct trade with Europe, North Carolina, with harbors at Beaufort and Wilmington, had considerable interest.[41] The agency most vocal in its advocacy of direct trade with Europe and Southern economic development was the Southern Commercial Convention, of which nine sessions were held from 1852 to 1859.[42] For this reason, North Carolina was represented in seven of the nine sessions of the convention and until 1857 took an interest in their activities. One writer in commenting on the meeting of the Southern Commercial Convention in Virginia in January, 1856, urged the South to prepare to take care of itself should the necessity for doing so arise. The South, he declared, had the capital, the seaports, and abundant raw products and needed only a little "yankee enterprise."

> If we had this [he wrote] . . . we could take such steps . . . as would make the abolitionists and freesoilers our very "negro-catchers." Yes, but let them see the South resolved no longer to be insulted by their officious interference, and preparing to be independent of them for all her supplies, and you may depend upon it, they would soon take a better view of our domestic institution, and let us alone. Let us then touch their pockets—let us increase our trade with the northwest and the south—let us import from foreign countries for ourselves, and thus, while we stimulate our own agricultural pursuits, at the same time secure our commercial independence.[43]

[41] See for example *North Carolina Standard,* December 5, 1849, and the New Bern *Eastern Carolina Republican* quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* November 13, 1850. During the ante-bellum period the trunk line railroads in the state ran from east to west thereby facilitating trade between the coast and the back country.

[42] For a good treatment of these conventions see William W. Davis, "Ante-Bellum Southern Commercial Conventions," *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society,* V (1904), 154-202; R. R. Russel, *Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism, 1840-1861;* Herbert Wender, "Southern Commercial Conventions."

[43] Anonymous writer from Richmond County in *North Carolina Standard,* February 13, 1856. The obstacle of the mountains to trade between North Carolina and the northwest was probably responsible for the little interest which North Carolina took in the movement to increase

North Carolina, in time, became impatient with politicians' control of the commercial convention and dissatisfied with the continued failure of the convention to accomplish any tangible results. "What the South wants," proclaimed the *North Carolina Standard,* "is, *action,* not abstract resolves—*steps to open a direct trade with Europe.*" If the supply of cotton could be shut off from the North for only twelve months then it would "soon learn a new lesson on slavery and the rights of the South under a common Constitution."[44] The Southern Commercial Convention, under the dominance of politicians, failed to accomplish any tangible results. After the Savannah session, December, 1856, which was largely dominated by ultra-Southern politicians, North Carolina's interest in the convention waned. "Southern Commercial Conventions," wrote one newspaper, "are a huge failure, a humbug, a *simulacrum,* a shadow, a deception, a heartless cheat."[45] The failure of these conventions in the past, however, did not mean that they could not be of tremendous benefit to the South. The *Raleigh Register* advised, "Let Merchants, . . . well informed, practical men, compose these conventions, and there is every reason to believe that a plan to deliver the South from commercial vassalage to the North will be devised and carried successfully out."[46]

With the increase in the anti-slavery agitation, the South sought more efficacious means of retaliation. Non-intercourse was thought by many to be the best means of bringing the North

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trade between the South Atlantic Coastal States and the northwest. The subject received considerable attention in the sessions of the Southern Commercial Convention.

[44] December 17, 1856.

[45] *South-Side Democrat* quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* July 22, 1857. In commenting upon the Southern Commercial Convention which met at Knoxville in 1857, the *Raleigh Register,* September 9, 1857, wrote: "It is much to be hoped by all, save those who never tire of the burlesque and the farcical, that the late pow-wow at Knoxville about every thing but commerce, will give the *coup de grace* to those heterogeneous assemblies, yclept 'Southern Commercial Conventions,' which have annually made the whole South suffer the ridicule due only to a few thundergustical wind bags that could blow Aeolus out of his cave. . . ." The proceedings of the nine sessions of the Southern Commercial Convention are in *DeBow's Review,* XIV-XXVI, *passim.*

[46] November 4, 1857.

to its senses and of silencing the abolitionists.[47] Non-intercourse could best be accomplished, according to some citizens, by taxing goods from the Northern states.[48] A bill to levy a ten per cent tax upon goods brought into the state from non-slaveholding states after January 1, 1852, was introduced into the legislature in 1850, but found no great support in that body.[49] If only all trade could be stopped with the Northern abolitionists and those who refused to enforce the fugitive slave law, then the rights of the South would be respected.[50] The only thing that would silence the abolitionists, advised the *Raleigh Star,* was the dressing of "all our citizens . . . in North Carolina manufactures, and foreign products imported through our own ports."[51]

John Brown's raid in October, 1859, gave a decided impetus to the feeling in the South that non-intercourse and complete economic independence of the North was necessary to the maintenance of Southern Rights and to the preservation of the Southern civilization.[52] Citizens of the state were encouraged to use no Northern products and to refrain from spending money "in pleasure travel and luxurious living at the North."[53] "Let us then commence a *peaceful* battle with the North," urged the *Raleigh Register,* "and persevere in it until we achieve the conquest of our freedom from our present unwise, dangerous

[47] See letter signed "The Voice of Many" in the *Tarborough Press,* September 28, 1850.

[48] Anonymous writer from Warren County in the *North Carolina Standard,* January 11, 1851.

[49] *North Carolina Standard,* January 11, 1851; *Senate Journal 1850-1851,* p. 36. Citizens of Rowan and Guilford counties petitioned the legislature to levy a tax on goods from the non-slaveholding states. *Legislative Documents, 1850-1851,* II, 687-691.

[50] *North Carolina Standard,* April 16, 1851.

[51] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* November 5, 1851.

[52] An anonymous writer in the *North Carolina Standard,* November 30, 1859, compared the relations between North and South to those between the spider and the fly. The comparison ended as follows: "'You foolish thing,' said the spider, grinning maliciously, 'you might have broken the web about you if you had commenced in time; but it is too late now. You are in my clutches, . . . now that you are helpless I will insult and punish you as much as I please, and then eat out your flesh and blood and marrow, and leave your empty and useless carcass to dangle in the toils I have thrown around you' . . ."

[53] *Raleigh Register,* December 14, 1859.

and degrading dependence on her."[54] The Democrats of Franklin County recommended "a determined and settled system of non-intercourse with the North" as one of the best means of securing respect for Southern Rights.[55] Southern importers, capitalizing on the hostility toward the North, appealed to the merchants of the South for business with the statement that "All of us hold sentiments in common on the agitating question of the day—slavery; and all of us desire . . . to become commercially independent of the North."[56] Others proposed more definite means of compelling the Northern states to end their abolition agitation. In addition to the proposal to tax goods from the non-slaveholding states, it was suggested that a discriminatory tax of one thousand dollars be placed on a retail license to sell goods from states that stirred up the slavery issue and failed to enforce the fugitive slave law.[57] These proposals never became more than mere suggestions. The dependence of the South upon the manufactured commodities of the North was too complete and too firmly established to be broken by anything short of necessity or industrialization. The scarcity of capital made conditions unfavorable for industrialization and in the minds of the people the necessity for economic independence did not come until the separation of the sections. Nevertheless the agitation and propaganda for Southern economic independence made the people of the state "sectional conscious" and were a means of keeping before their eyes the hostility of the North toward the institutions of the South.

In the fifties the two sections, North and South, moved steadily apart in sympathies and associations. The South had now come to resent bitterly the attacks upon its "peculiar institution." Especially was the South resentful of the anti-slavery literature circulated in the South; it believed that such literature was calculated to incite insurrection and social disorder. North Carolina joined the rest of the South in its condemnation of

[54] December 21, 1859.

[55] *North Carolina Standard,* December 28, 1859.

[56] See a joint advertisement of the Charleston, S. C., importers and jobbers in the *Raleigh Register,* January 4, 1860.

[57] Anonymous writer in the *North Carolina Standard,* December 21, 1859.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* the most widely circulated piece of anti-slavery literature. The *North Carolina Standard* refused to advertise it[58] and referred to it as "the emanation evidently of a prejudiced and depraved mind, and made up of falsehood, passion, and calumny."[59] *Uncle Tom's Cabin* received surprisingly little public attention in the state.[60] Newspapers mentioned it only occasionally and then quite disdainfully.[61] Yet, its tremendous popularity in the North only made the South feel more than ever before that there was among the Northern people an intense hostility to slavery.[62]

The book which incited the greatest disapproval in the state was Helper's *Impending Crisis,* published in 1856.[63] The *North Carolina Standard* declared Helper to be "beneath the level of contempt and infamy." "There are some treasons so gross, so palpable, and so heinous," it wrote, "that the whole world sees them, and all good men curse them, and then say no more. Such is the treason of this creature."[64] Public men in the state refused to admit the possession of a copy of the book. When it was reported that Governor John W. Ellis owned a copy, the

[58] June 2, 1852. [59] February 16, 1853.

[60] The author has found but one mention of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in more than sixty personal manuscript collections and only very infrequent references to it in the newspapers.

[61] *Raleigh Register,* May 25, 1853.

[62] James Johnston Pettigrew gave the following account of a performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Philadelphia in October, 1859: "We expected to see great outbursts of feeling and to have our sensibilities very much shocked by the exhibition, but not a word of it. The moral effect of the exhibition on the audience (except the negro gallery) was positively nothing. Even when Uncle Tom comes in to be killed, the mirth of the auditors could not be restrained. . . . I have not enjoyed myself so much in many a day and think dispassionately that the dramatising takes the edge entirely off the novel." Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, October 27, 1859, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[63] See *supra,* pp. 103-104. "Slaveholders considered it a 'deadly attack' upon their 'peculiar institution,' all the worse because it came from the pen of a Southerner. The book was regarded as 'incendiary, insurrectionary, and hostile to the peace and domestic tranquility of the country.' Its author was villified and branded as a 'damned abolitionist,' a 'poor traitor to his native sod and native skies,' a 'bedlamite,' a 'scoundrel beneath the level of contempt and infamy,' a 'narrow-brained noodle,' and 'one of the most miserable renegades and mendacious miscreants the world has ever seen.'" H. T. Lefler, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

[64] September 16, 1857.

North Carolina Standard wrote that he lighted his pipe with his copy.[65] Representative Asa Biggs in a speech in Congress denounced Helper as an embezzler and a man without character.[66] The *Raleigh Register* assured Helper that he had "so many *ardent admirers*" in the state that if he would only return to North Carolina he would never be allowed to leave it again, but would be given a "home in the bosom of his native soil."[67] Ten copies of the *Impending Crisis* were publicly burned in High Point, North Carolina,[68] and four ministers were driven from the state for circulating copies of the book.[69]

Northern periodicals containing anti-slavery articles likewise aroused tremendous resentment among the people of the South.[70] In 1854, both *Harper's* and *Putnam's* magazines were severely denounced by the North Carolina press for arraying themselves against the South. The *Edenton Whig* charged that these periodicals had "deliberately thrown themselves into the tide of excitement now setting against us, and prostituted themselves to the disreputable task of giving such a direction to its current as they hope may eventuate in the complete destruction of our *peculiar* institution."[71] The following year the *North Carolina Standard* pronounced *Putnam's Magazine* "only fit to be read by the putrid masses of Northern fanatics, traitors, and political desperadoes."[72] As for *Harper's Magazine*, the *Standard* would have been pleased to see it "banished."[73] Southerners were repeatedly urged not to subscribe to any Northern periodical that published anti-slavery articles.[74] Undoubtedly, many North Carolinians were incensed by the hostility of Northern

[65] August 10, 1859.

[66] *Cong. Globe*, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 1459-1460.

[67] December 7, 1859.

[68] H. T. Lefler, *op. cit.*, p. 26. [69] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[70] ". . . give us no periodicals at all" wrote the *North Carolina Standard*, October 11, 1854, "—no light literature whatsoever, if it cannot come to us clear of abolitionism and of prejudices and hatreds calculated to endanger the security and happiness of our people." Similar statements appeared rather frequently in all the state papers in the 1850's.

[71] Quoted in *Raleigh Register*, September 27, 1854.

[72] October 24, 1855; see also a public letter condemning *Putnam's Magazine* in the *Raleigh Register*, March 4, 1857.

[73] May 27, 1857.

[74] *Raleigh Register*, August 29, 1855, and January 4, 1860; *North Carolina Standard*, September 23, 1854.

periodicals to slavery and some stopped subscribing to them because of their anti-Southern policy.[75] In the place of Northern periodicals, the circulation of Southern magazines was encouraged as "the most effectual way of reaching the masses and inculcating sound views and unity of action in regard to Southern institutions."[76] Likewise, textbooks containing sentiments inimical to the institutions of the South were frowned upon and in some cases excluded from the schools.[77]

Southerners came to feel in the fifties that they should no longer visit and patronize a section of the country that denounced their institutions. North Carolinians were urged to educate their children at home rather than in the Northern schools which were hostile to slavery.[78] Harvard University was particularly condemned for its anti-Southern views,[79] and students from North Carolina were requested not to attend that institution.[80]

The enmity between the two sections was intensified by the course of events during the 1850's, and the people of the Southern states were coming to look with suspicion upon the North and everything that smacked of anti-slavery sentiment. North Carolinians were asked to discontinue "the absurd and self-disrespectful practice, of going to the hostile North to spend their money for mere pleasure,"[81] and to "live within . . . [themselves], if the Northern people *will* have it so."[82] On this subject, the *Raleigh Register* wrote emphatically: "The mere pleas-

[75] *North Carolina Standard,* September 23, 1854; William S. Pettigrew discontinued his subscription to the *Missionary Herald,* January 22, 1857, declaring that he did not care to support a journal which attacked the Southern people and slavery. Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[76] Anonymous writer in the *North Carolina Standard,* June 20, 1855; see also the *Raleigh Register,* August 29, 1855.

[77] Wake Forest College discontinued the use of Dr. Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science* for this reason; *North Carolina Standard,* November 5, 1856. D. S. Richardson, one of the board of editors of the *North Carolina Journal of Education,* in reviewing abolition textbooks wrote: "Let every book in which the individual sentiment and moral of our section is disparaged, be at once published and repudiated in all our schools of every grade." February, 1861, in Thos. M. Pittman Collection.

[78] *Raleigh Register,* February 5, 1853.

[79] *North Carolina Standard,* February 21, 1855.

[80] *Ibid.,* March 21, 1855.

[81] *Raleigh Register,* June 3, 1857.

[82] *North Carolina Standard,* June 28, 1851.

ure seeker from the South, who spends his money at the North, is, in our opinion, guilty of moral treason to the South. He furnishes his country's foes with 'aid and comfort,' by giving them money, the 'sinews' of that 'war' which they are waging against those whom he is most bound to cherish, protect, and defend."[83]

The people of the state were reminded "that northern hatred is measureless and deadly . . . and that there are hundreds and thousands of free-soilers, fanatics and abolitionists, the blackness of whose souls and the treachery of whose hearts would put to shame those of the Iscariot himself."[84] The people of the South hated bitterly the leaders of the anti-slavery faction in the North. The *North Carolina Standard* said of Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts that "such a man would grace the gallows far better than he will the Senate of the United States."[85] One North Carolinian wrote the representative from his congressional district to " 'Pitch into' old Giddings and Campbell every opportunity you have."[86] When Edward Stanly, formerly of North Carolina, accepted the Republican nomination for the governorship of California, he was severely criticized by the press of the state. The *Milton Chronicle* requested him "never to add insult to injury by planting again his foot upon Southern soil."[87] In 1858, Governor Thomas Bragg was asked to urge the legislature to enact laws that would check the activities of Northern agitators in their "maddened unreasonableness and insane fanaticism."[88]

[83] August 12, 1857. It is interesting to note that the *Wilmington Journal,* October 4, 1860, complained "that there have been more Southern visitors to the North this season than we ever recollect to have seen before."

[84] The *Hornet's Nest and True Southron,* April 26, 1851.

[85] April 30, 1851.

[86] Jos. E. Carter to H. M. Shaw, May 2, 1858, Thos. M. Pittman Collection.

[87] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* August 26, 1857.

[88] *North Carolina Standard,* May 26, 1858. "There is no manner of use for Southern members of Congress to argue with those Saxons of the North and Northwest," wrote W. B. Davis of Wilmington, February 13, 1858. "Their whole *foundation* from the beginning is blasphemous *rottenness* and classic corruption; and treason is at the bottom of all their platforms. . . . Their ring leaders ought to have been hung, 'in the sight of God,' fifty years ago. Religious and political classic duplicity,

Freedom of speech, thought, and action on the slavery question rapidly disappeared in North Carolina in the fifties. Criticism of the institution of slavery was not welcomed and it was unwise to express sympathy with anything that was thought inimical to the South. The best illustration of the extent to which free thought and free speech had been annihilated is the case of Professor B. S. Hedrick of the University of North Carolina.[89] Hedrick was accused of having expressed a desire to vote for John C. Frémont, Republican candidate for the presidency in 1856.[90] As soon as this became known, the press of the state, led by the *North Carolina Standard,* demanded his dismissal on the ground that "*The expression of black Republican opinions* in our midst is incompatible *with our honor and safety as a people.*"[91] He was burned in effigy by students at the University[92] and at the meeting of the State Educational Convention.[93] It was reported that the students planned to tar and feather him and that a riot was imminent if he were not speedily dismissed.[94] "Outside pressure" was so great that the executive committee of the University was forced to dismiss him.[95] His dismissal was received favorably by the press and the public,[96] the great majority of which probably agreed with the *North Carolina Standard* "that no man who is avowedly for John C. Frémont for President, ought to be allowed to breathe the air or to tread the soil of North Carolina."[97]

Another notable indication of the intense hostility prevalent in the state toward Northern anti-slavery sentiment was the atti-

corruption and tyranny by statute, are at the bottom of all their ideas and principles of Government to 'rule America.'" D. S. Reid Papers, Second Series, II, 1856-1880.

[89] For an account of the case and documents relating to it see J. G. deRoulhac Hamilton, "Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick."

[90] *North Carolina Standard,* October 1, 1856.

[91] *Ibid.,* October 8, 1856; the *Western Democrat, North Carolina Whig,* and Wilmington *Commercial* also demanded his dismissal.

[92] W. P. Mangum to Martha P. Mangum, 1856, Willie P. Mangum Papers.

[93] *North Carolina Standard,* November 5, 1856.

[94] Charles Manly to David L. Swain, October 8, 18, 1856, Swain MSS.

[95] Manly to Swain, October 18, 1856, Swain MSS.

[96] *North Carolina Standard,* October 22, 1856; W. P. Mangum to Martha P. Mangum, 1856, Willie P. Mangum Papers.

[97] November 5, 1856.

tude of North Carolina in 1856 toward the assault of Preston Brooks, representative in Congress from South Carolina, upon Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, following the vitriolic speech of the latter attacking Senator A. P. Butler of South Carolina and the institutions of the South. The *North Carolina Standard* thought Sumner "deserved every lick he received" but regretted that the caning took place in the Senate Chamber.[98] The North Carolina delegation in Congress supported Brooks, and Thomas L. Clingman and Warren Winslow both spoke against the resolution to expel Brooks from the House of Representatives and in defense of Brooks's action.[99] When Brooks passed through Charlotte on August 27, he was received with great respect by the people.[100] He also spent a night in Raleigh on his way to South Carolina, and there, according to the *North Carolina Standard,* a crowd gathered and cheered him in approval of his conduct in "chastising the scoundrel Sumner."[101]

John Brown's raid in October, 1859, increased immeasurably in the South the apprehension of slave uprisings. More than ever before, Northerners and persons professing anti-slavery views were under suspicion. Several persons suspected of circulating "incendiary literature" were forced to leave North Carolina in 1859-1860[102] and public expression of anti-slavery

[98] June 4, 1856.

[99] *Cong. Globe,* 34 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 734-739, 902-906. Clingman was among those who delivered eulogies of Brooks at the funeral services held for him in the House of Representatives. *North Carolina Standard,* February 4, 1857.

[100] *North Carolina Whig,* September 3, 1856.

[101] September 3, 1856. The *Raleigh Register,* September 3, 1856, wrote that Brooks's remarks on that occasion reduced what slight sympathy the people had had for him. Undoubtedly, many discriminating people in the state did not approve Brooks's action; yet, the present writer cannot agree with the statement in H. M. Wagstaff, *State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina,* p. 94, that "Irrespective of party, Brooks's conduct was very generally condemned as an outrage."

[102] *North Carolina Standard,* November 30, 1859; *Raleigh Register,* January 4, 1860. Three ministers were driven from Guilford and Randolph counties in January, 1860, because of their endorsement and circulation of Helper's *Impending Crisis,* and one Sanburn of New York was asked to leave Randolph because "his conversation on the subject of slavery was not what it should have been." In December, 1859, one

views was likely to lead to social ostracism, legal indictment, or expulsion from the state. The most publicized of the cases involving the dissemination of "incendiary literature" was that of the Reverend Daniel Worth, member of a well-known North Carolina family of Guilford County. He had emigrated to Indiana and had become fanatical in his anti-slavery views. Late in 1859, it was discovered that he was using "the strongest and vilest incendiary language" in his sermons and was circulating copies of Helper's *Impending Crisis* in Alamance, Chatham, Randolph, and Guilford counties.[103] Popular feeling against Worth rose to fever heat, and the magistrates had to guard him to prevent his being taken from the sheriff and hanged. A contemporary wrote "that if Worth had been able to give bail, he would have been hung [*sic*] in less than an hour after he was discharged."[104] Worth was convicted in both Randolph and Guilford counties and in each case was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. However, after appealing his case and giving bail, he left the state and did not serve the sentence.[105]

North and South drifted further and further apart in the eighteen-fifties and the bonds of union between the sections became ever weaker. The South was coming to believe that the Northern people were determined to destroy in one way or another the institution of slavery. The conviction that "true affection" could never grow again "where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep" was instilled in the minds and hearts of many North Carolinians.[106] "One by one" commented the

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Sandy Tate, a stone mason of Charlotte was tarred and feathered and ridden on a rail for expressing abolition opinions.

[103] *Raleigh Register,* January 4, 1860; John T. Harress to Governor Ellis, December 30, 1859, Governor's Papers 1859.

[104] John M. Dick to Governor Ellis, January 7, 1860, Governor's Letter Book, p. 170; *North Carolina Standard,* December 28, 1859.

[105] S. A. Ashe, *History of North Carolina,* II, 528. In 1850-1851, two Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, Adam Crooks and Jesse McBride, who were accused of disseminating anti-slavery opinions in Guilford, Randolph, Stokes, and Forsyth counties, were threatened with hanging. In order to save their own lives and those of their converts, they left the state. This incident attracted state-wide attention. *Raleigh Register,* October 23, 1850 *et seq.*

[106] *North Carolina Standard,* November 16, 1859. John K. Ruffin of North Carolina, while attending medical school in Philadelphia, wrote,

North Carolina Standard, "the links that hold us together as one people are snapping."[107] Some could see no prospect of peace between the two sections so long as the slavery issue existed.[108] Predictions of the inevitable dissolution of the Union as a result of the conflicting interests of the sections became more frequent as the year 1860 approached.[109] The most comprehensive analysis of the threat of disunion made by a North Carolinian appeared in an open letter written in January, 1857 by H. K. Burgwyn, a prominent planter of Northampton County. Having lived in both New England and the South, he reached his conclusions from firsthand observations made in the two sections. New Englanders, he wrote, formed their opinion of slavery by sentimental literature and misinformation. The best way to change their opposition was to inform them of the true condition of slavery in the South. He did not believe in an irreconcilable conflict of interests between the sections, but, on the contrary, thought that North and South could "dwell together in unity, both of *interest* and feeling" if the North would "cease these denunciations and false statements" about the South. Continuing, he wrote:

If there is any one conviction in my mind on this subject derived from a knowledge of the people of New England, stronger than another, it is, that the South should never yield one atom of her full, just, and *equal* rights under the Constitution; no more compromises . . . they are but the resorts of weak minds, or the *last* refuge of a strong one, and even then, can

October 24, 1856: "I am tired living in political fellowship with a people that feel towards us more as enemies and rivals than as brothers. I believe disunion is inevitable, and the sooner it comes the better chance the South will have to weather the storm. Acting on this conviction, if I thought my vote would elect Fremont, he would have it most cheerfully." J. K. Ruffin to Thomas Ruffin, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Ruffin Papers*, II, 529.

[107] June 10, 1857.

[108] Speech of Henry W. Miller, June 5, 1858, quoted in the *North Carolina Standard*, June 16, 1858.

[109] "Considering the alienation between the North and South," wrote Mitchell C. King, a prominent physician of Henderson County, "and the clash of sectional interests, which seemed to be inevitable in a common government, your petitioner was of the opinion that the safety and honor of the pro-slavery states required their separation from the non-slaveholding states, and a distinct nationality of themselves." Application for Pardon; see also the Greensboro *Times*, December 1, 1860.

only postpone the end. . . . No! our only permanent safety is to place ourselves firmly on our equal rights and say to the Republican party "destroy the Constitution! break that compact which now makes us one people, (and which alas! is almost the sole remaining link between us,) . . . and we become a separate nation." We may meanly purchase present immunity from attacks, by yielding to the present demands, but what is to become of our children? for when were the fanatic followers of an abstract principle ever known to pause in their career of conquest? . . . And let us not be deceived by the apparent change of views and moderation of their leaders in Congress. In the present state of the New England mind, they *are not* supported by their own constituents in this course.

In a letter to the New York *Journal of Commerce,* written in December, 1856, he declared it to be his "deliberate conviction . . . that this Union must soon give way, under the shocks it continues to receive from both extremities of the Union." Given the existing conditions, he concluded that the Union was soon to be dissolved "because a set of stubborn men insist on forcing an *abstraction*—that 'slavery is a great civil and moral evil'—upon another part of our common country, against their wishes and interests."[110]

Sectional disputes were fixing in the minds of many in the state the indelible belief that there was in progress a great conflict between North and South. The course of events seemed to substantiate the contention that the interests of the two regions were dissimilar, possibly irreconcilably conflicting, and that consequently they were drifting apart. This conviction did not mean that these North Carolinians desired separation from the Union; they most certainly did not. Yet, the belief that the interests of the South were different from those of the North, that the institution of slavery was threatened by the anti-slavery fanatics of the North, that the economic interests of North Carolina might be better furthered outside the Union, and finally that the North had a firm dislike for the South served to prepare the minds of the people for disunion and to make them receptive to the arguments for secession in 1860-1861.

[110] Both letters are quoted in full in the *North Carolina Standard,* April 8, 1857.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOUTHERN RIGHTS MOVEMENT 1853-1859

The acceptance in the election of 1852 of the Compromise of 1850 as a final settlement of the slavery issue was followed by a brief period of political calm in North Carolina. It was the sincere wish of both parties that the slavery question would be allowed to rest. The election of 1852 convinced many Southern Whigs that the Northern anti-slavery element of the party was determined to dictate the party policies and that consequently the rights of the South could not be assured of protection by the national Whig party. Many Southern Whigs of this opinion left the party and joined the ranks of the Democracy. To them, support of the rights of the South was superior to party loyalty. The disintegration of the Whig party in the South which went on apace after 1852 was of importance to the Southern Rights movement. The addition of pro-Southern Whigs to the Democratic party increased the emphasis which the Southern wing of the party placed upon the maintenance of Southern Rights. Moreover, the disintegration of the Whig organization in the South weakened the vitality of national sentiment and removed the main organized opposition to the secession movement.[1] The presence of the Whig spirit in North Carolina, however, remained throughout the decade an effective check to extremist doctrine.

The congressional campaign of 1853 in North Carolina was characterized by insurgency in the Democratic ranks on the issue of distribution of the remaining public lands among the

[1] The *Raleigh Register* (April 2, 1853) realized this fact and urged the Whig party to maintain an effective organization in North Carolina: "In the meantime we beg them [Whigs] to believe that the odious doctrine of *Secession* is not yet dead, . . . and that it has . . . received a fresh vitality, which calls for *their* co-operation in order to prevent its insidious inroads.—Thus far, 'they've but scotched the snake, not killed it.'"

states. Seeing the power of the free states increasing as the territories were filled up by settlers from the North and seeking financial means for a public works program, a large proportion of the North Carolina Democrats had by 1853 come to favor distribution in spite of the opposition of the party. The regular Democratic candidates were opposed in three districts by distribution Democrats who polled large votes though they failed of election.[2] The only district in which Southern Rights played any important part in the campaign was the seventh,[3] where Burton Craige, pro-Southern Democrat, defeated James W. Osborne, Whig. The Whig press charged Craige with being an enemy of the Union.[4] Craige, in the discussions with his opponent, promised the people that he would use his efforts in defense of the rights of the South. Although the slavery question was momentarily quiet, he said, it would soon burst out again and defenders of Southern Rights were needed in Congress.[5] In the second district, Thomas Ruffin, strongly pro-Southern in his views, whom the Washington *North State Whig* called "a Secessionist, a Disunionist, a reviler of the Compromise," was elected over his distribution opponent.[6] The preceding legislature, composed of Democratic majorities, had redistricted the state, so that in most cases the districts were either safely Whig or Democratic.[7] Consequently, the results were determined by the strength of the respective parties rather than by issues.

The political calm was disturbed early in 1854 by the introduction in Congress of Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska bill. The

[2] W. C. Loftin, W. F. Leake, and A. W. Venable, distributionists, opposed Thomas Ruffin, William S. Ashe, and A. M. Lewis, the regular party nominees, in the second, third, and fourth districts. Results in *Raleigh Register,* August 17, 1853.

[3] The seventh district was composed of the following counties: Catawba, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Cabarrus, Union, Anson, Stanly, and Cleveland.

[4] *Raleigh Register,* April 16, June 8, 1853.

[5] *North Carlina Standard,* June 8, 1853.

[6] Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* June 1, 1853.

[7] In the fourth district, division in the Democratic ranks enabled the Whigs to elect Sion H. Rogers. The result of the election was the selection of five Democrats and three Whigs. *Raleigh Register,* August 31, 1853.

Democratic press in the state received favorably Douglas' report for organizing the Nebraska territory as a reaffirmation of the Compromise of 1850 and the extension of its principles to the other territory of the United States.[8] Both county and state Democratic meetings approved the bill.[9]

The Whig press was not at first so enthusiastic. The *Raleigh Register* reminded the people that the possibility of establishing slavery in that region was "exceedingly remote." That being the case, it doubted the propriety of disturbing the Missouri Compromise. With considerable foresight, it added: "This bill, at all events, will be the rallying cry for another anti-slavery agitation which will throw all that have preceded it in the shade."[10] Moreover, the *Register* was suspicious of Douglas' motives, believing "that he has been actuated by that low demogogueism [*sic*] for which he is so notoriously distinguished."[11] Although it could not see that the South would gain anything except the recognition of an abstract right, it thought that, since the slavery issue had been raised again, the South should take a united stand and carry the measure through.[12]

The North Carolina members of Congress, both Whig and Democratic, joined the rest of the Southern members in support of the bill. The speeches of the North Carolina members were calm and without threats. They asserted the equal rights of the South in the territories, but generally made no threats of secession should these rights not be recognized.[13] The most elaborate

[8] *North Carolina Standard,* June 11, 1854.

[9] Meetings held in Wake, Chowan, Gaston, Orange, Franklin, New Hanover, Anson, Robeson, Duplin, Ashe, Bladen, Lenoir, Beaufort, Jones, Caswell, Davie, Carteret, Henderson, Warren, Cumberland, and Franklin counties adopted resolutions approving the bill. *North Carolina Standard,* February-April, 1854.

[10] February 1, 1854.

[11] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* February 22, 1854.

[12] February 11, 1854. The *Fayetteville Argus* (Whig) took a similar position; on the other hand the Wilmington *Commercial* (Whig) thought the Kansas-Nebraska bill "the *only measure that can put to rest forever the agitation of the Slavery Question.*" Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* March 8, 1854.

[13] *Cong. Globe,* 33 Cong., 1 Sess., *passim;* see for example speech of Thomas L. Clingman, Appendix, pp. 488-492.

and pro-Southern speech made by a North Carolinian in support of the bill was that by John Kerr, Whig, in the House. Although professing great love for the Union, he declared he would "trample it in the dust" before he would allow it to be the instrument of "a dominant majority" for the oppression of the South. Rather than submit to inequality within the Union, he preferred that the South should withdraw and establish a new government.[14] Of the North Carolina delegation, only R. C. Puryear and Sion H. Rogers, Whigs, voted against the bill.[15] They were severely condemned by the *North Carolina Standard* for thus deserting Southern Rights.[16]

Throughout the heated controversy in Congress over the Kansas-Nebraska bill, the North Carolina Democrats had viewed it as a reaffirmation of the constitutional right of the slaveholders to go into the territories of the United States and of the principle of non-intervention by Congress. The Whigs, in their state convention, had also endorsed the doctrine of non-intervention, and Henry W. Miller in his address before that body, declared: "In my humble judgment, this Union cannot be preserved, without the recognition and enforcement, by Congress, of this doctrine of 'non-intervention' on the subject of slavery."[17] Viewing the Kansas-Nebraska bill as an endorsement of Southern Rights, North Carolina greatly resented the storm of opposition which the measure aroused in the North.[18] The passage of the act was hailed in the state as a triumph for the rights of the South, "opening for the future a clear and tranquil sky, and promising sunshine and peace for many, many

[14] Speech quoted in full in *North Carolina Standard,* March 29, 1854. Kerr was applauded in the state for this speech, and the citizens of Caswell County held a dinner in his honor to show their "appreciation of [the] course pursued by those of our distinguished statesmen who gave to this measure their able and efficient support." N. W. Roan, E. Graves, and others to William A. Graham, September 4, 1854, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[15] J. G. deR. Hamilton, *Party Politics,* pp. 164-165. Four years later George E. Badger declared his vote for the Kansas-Nebraska act the greatest mistake of his political career. *Fayetteville Observer,* October 22, 1860.

[16] June 14, 1854.

[17] *Raleigh Register,* February 25, March 1, 1854.

[18] *North Carolina Standard,* February 1, March 8, 22, 1854.

years to come."[19] It is hard to see how any prediction could have been further from the truth.

The South hoped that the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act would not be an empty triumph, but that new slave states would be formed and admitted into the Union. Should the North refuse to admit slave states, the threat was made that *"the South will resist, even to the disruption of the bonds which hold these States together."*[20] The Democrats of New Hanover adopted a resolution that a refusal to admit any state into the Union because of the existence of slavery therein was a "just cause for a disruption of all ties that bind us to the Union."[21] There were those, however, who took a more realistic view of the territorial question. The western territories, they saw, would be filled up by immigrants and settlers from the free states, not by slaveholders, and soon these territories would be requesting admittance to the Union as *"free States, hostile to slavery. . . .* What then? Where will the safety of the South be? We shall be at the mercy of an overwhelming and unscrupulous majority both in the Senate and House!"[22]

The increased anti-slavery activity in the North immediately following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act gave impetus to the Southern Rights movement. On November 28, Thomas Settle, Democrat of Rockingham County, introduced in the House of Commons resolutions which endorsed the Kansas-Nebraska act and declared that in the event the federal government repealed or impaired the efficiency of the fugitive slave law "it will amount to a virtual dissolution of the Union; and . . . it will become the duty of this State to take such measures

[19] *Ibid.*, May 17, 31, June 3, 7, 1854. The Wilmington *Commercial* stated: "The passage of the bill, with the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law in the free States, will be of more 'benefit to the South,' than any or all of the acts of Congress passed since we were an independent nation." Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* June 17, 1854. On the other hand, Kenneth Rayner, prominent Whig, remarked to Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia that the passage of the act "repealed the institution of slavery." Kenneth Rayner, Application for Pardon.

[20] *North Carolina Standard,* November 15, 1854.

[21] *North Carolina Standard,* September 19, 1855.

[22] *Raleigh Register,* July 26, 1854.

as may be required for her safety and security."[23] The pro-Southern press commended the resolutions and hoped that the legislature would take a decided stand on such an important issue. The Wilmington *Commercial* thought "The principle ought to be asserted boldly and unanimously; and without any fire-eating, blustering or fillibustering folly, show a determination that no consequences can shake from its hold."[24] The *North Carolina Standard* contended that the increased hostility of the North toward the institutions of the South made the time especially ripe for the adoption of strong slavery resolutions.[25] There was not sufficient unanimity of opinion in the House to secure the passage of Settle's resolutions and, although the efforts of Whigs to make them milder failed, they were laid upon the table.[26]

Governor Thomas Bragg, in his inaugural address in January, 1855, showed no such hesitancy as had the legislature on the question of Southern Rights. He spoke as follows: "We cannot shut our eyes, and ought not if we could, to the spectacle which has lately been presented in the non-slaveholding States of this Union, and to the efforts which have been made, . . . to array section against section and people against people. . . . The day may come, . . . when our Northern brethren will discover that the Southern States intend to be equals in the Union, or independent out of it!"[27]

When the Know-Nothing party appeared in North Carolina politics in 1855, the most effective argument used against it was the charge that it was an enemy to Southern Rights. The Democratic press pointed out with telling effectiveness that the Know-Nothing party in the Northern states was closely identified with abolitionism.[28] Thomas L. Clingman told his constit-

[23] *House Journal 1854-55,* p. 59; *North Carolina Standard,* December 13, 1854.

[24] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard,* December 23, 1854.

[25] December 2, 1854. [26] *House Journal 1854-55,* pp. 290-291.

[27] *Legislative Documents 1854-55,* I, 8.

[28] *North Carolina Standard,* May-August, 1855; it charged that every member of the House of Representatives who had been elected by the Know-Nothings favored changing the fugitive slave law and that the nine United States Senators elected by Know-Nothing legislatures were "avowed and uncompromising abolitionists." July 21, 1855.

uents that the Know-Nothing party was but "a mask for the great abolition crusade of the North." Of the same opinion were many other North Carolina Whigs.[29] When the national council of the party adopted the third or Union degree, largely through the influence of Kenneth Rayner, the North Carolina Know-Nothing press rejoiced that the abolitionist element had been driven from the party.[30] Nevertheless, the party was never able to poll the full Whig vote in the state.

The stage for the exciting presidential contest of 1856 was set by a heated conflict over the election of speaker of the House of Representatives in the preceding Congress. After weeks of balloting and discussion the House was finally organized with N. P. Banks, anti-slavery Know-Nothing of Massachusetts, as speaker. The election of a bitter opponent of slavery as speaker produced little uneasiness in the state. It was feared that the House might enter upon an agitation of the slavery question, but with the Senate and Presidency Democratic, it was believed that the anti-slavery actions of the House would be checked.[31] "Let the people of the South only stand, and present a united front to their assailants," advised the *North Carolina Standard*, "and all will be well."[32]

On the eve of the presidential election of 1856, sincere apprehension was felt for the safety of the Union. A conservative North Carolinian wrote that "Affairs . . . look more like a dissolution than any thing that has happened since the foundation of the government. . . . I think the palmy days of our Republic are gone and what remains to us will only be gale & bitterness."[33] The opinion was frequently expressed that the presidential election would determine "whether the Union shall be

[29] *Ibid.*, July 28, September 29, 1855. The Know-Nothings carried but two districts in the congressional election of 1855 (*North Carolina Standard*, August 22, September 5, 1855) and in the gubernatorial election the following year, Thomas Bragg, Democrat, defeated John A. Gilmer, Know-Nothing, by 12,000 votes. *Ibid.*, August 20, 1856.

[30] *Carolina Watchman*, June 25, 1855; Raleigh *Star*, June 30, 1855; *Fayetteville Observer*, June 11, 1855.

[31] *North Carolina Standard*, January 9, 16, 30, February 6, 1856.

[32] January 16, 1856.

[33] Jas. C. Johnston to Wm. S. Pettigrew, February 4, 1856, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

perpetuated . . . [or] snapped asunder."[34] In the early months of 1856, Democratic meetings in many counties had expressed the conviction that the coming election was of vital significance to the perpetuity of the Union, and the State Democratic Convention reiterated that opinion.[35] In spite of their apprehension, Democrats of the slaveholding counties were determined not to "forego a solitary particle of . . . [their] Constitutional rights . . . even to save the Union."[36] The necessity for a determined fight for the protection of the rights of the South was likewise keenly felt among political leaders.[37]

The Whigs did not modify their views on slavery upon entering the American or Know-Nothing party. Consequently, should they become convinced that the national party was unsafe on this all-important issue it was a foregone conclusion that there would be a marked migration of this group into the ranks of the Democracy. As it became more apparent that the election of 1856 was one of vital importance to Southern Rights, prominent Whigs began to desert the Know-Nothing party. Already the Wilmington *Commercial,* former Whig journal, had pronounced it the duty of Southern members of the party to break away from the anti-slavery section and to join the Democrats.[38] On May 10, Walter L. Steele, prominent Whig of Rockingham County, announced that he could not support the Know-Nothing party because of its identity in certain sections of the country with abolitionism.[39] D. M. Barringer of Cabarrus County, long a member of the Whig party, wrote a friend, May 24, "I am Anti-Know nothing—& go for the South & her rights under the Constitution."[40] Many former Whigs, convinced that Fillmore had little chance of election, decided to support Buchanan, the

[34] *North Carolina Standard,* May 26, 1856.

[35] *Ibid.,* February-April, 1856; see for example the resolutions of Duplin County Democrats, *ibid.,* April 16, 1856.

[36] *North Carolina Standard,* February 27, 1856, resolutions of Wayne County Democrats. See also Perquimans County resolutions, *ibid.,* March 12, 1856.

[37] Ed. Graham Haywood to David S. Reid, March 15, 1856, D. S. Reid Papers, III, 1850-1856.

[38] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* February 13, 1856.

[39] *Ibid.,* June 4, 1856.

[40] Barringer to J. Johnston Pettigrew, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

Democratic candidate, in order to defeat Frémont, the Republican nominee.[41] The Democrats insisted that their party was a unit on the constitutional rights of the South, whereas the American party contained a powerful abolition element.[42] Apparently, this opinion was also held by many former Whigs since throughout the summer and until the day of the election, the desertions from the American ranks continued.[43] This movement away from the Know-Nothing party had become so widespread by August that Governor Bragg's majority over John A. Gilmer, his Know-Nothing opponent, exceeded 12,000 votes.[44] The Democrats also made substantial gains in the election of members of the legislature.[45] The *North Carolina Standard* declared that the result was determined not so much by state issues but by the fact that many Whigs "considered it their duty to make common cause, in this extreme crisis, against the enemies of the Union and the Constitutional rights of the South."[46]

There was genuine alarm in the state during the presidential campaign.[47] "The question is as to the *perpetuity of the Union*,"

[41] Geo. E. Badger to Jeremiah Clemens, July 30, 1856, MS. letter in the Library of Congress, quoted in L. F. London, The Public Career of George Edmund Badger, p. 244.

[42] *North Carolina Standard,* June 25, 1856. The *Standard* pointed to the resolution of the National Democratic Convention which upheld "non-interference by Congress with Slavery in State and Territory, or in the District of Columbia" as the proper positon on the slavery question.

[43] For the names of numerous persons who left the Know-Nothing party see *North Carolina Standard,* March 26, July 23, August 20, September 24, 1856; Thos. Bunting to Thos. D. McDowell, September 6, 1856, McDowell Papers.

[44] *North Carolina Standard,* August 20, 1856. George E. Badger made the following comment on the election: "Our election here day before yesterday has resulted in a most disastrous defeat to us and an amazing triumph to democracy. Our old line whigs behaved like apes—have turned democrats have ruined the state—Heaven help us!" Badger to J. J. Crittenden, August 9, 1856, North Carolina Letters from the Crittenden Papers.

[45] *North Carolina Standard,* September 3, 1856; 33 Democrats and 17 Know-Nothings were elected to the Senate, and 80 Democrats and 40 Know-Nothings to the House. [46] August 20, 1856.

[47] In a letter of June 30, 1856, Kenneth Rayner, Whig, wrote: "No man of any sagacity and observation can conceal from himself the fact that the present condition of the country is alarming." Quoted in *North*

wrote one North Carolinian, "and no sophistry or artifice can hide it from a thoughtful, calm man who loves his country more than party."[48] Secession again appeared frequently in the discussions for the first time since the crisis of 1850-1851. Foremost among the extreme pro-Southern faction in the state was William W. Holden. In the editorial columns of the *North Carolina Standard,* Holden advocated the preservation of the constitutional rights of the South even "to a separation of the states."[49] The Republican candidates, insisted the *Standard,* are

> *the mortal enemies of every man, woman and child in the Southern States.* . . . If they should succeed in this contest . . . the result will be a separation of the States. No human power can prevent it. . . . They would repeal the fugitive slave law, leaving Southern men no protection against kidnappers and manstealers. They would create insurrection and servile war in the South—they would put the torch to our dwellings and the knife to our throats. They are, therefore our enemies; . . . Their triumph would be the beginning of evils and calamities such as have never been known in this country.[50]

On the eve of the election, this paper closed its attack upon the Republican party with the announcement that "It would be cowardly and pusillanimous for the South to submit to the election of Frémont."[51]

The *North Carolina Standard* was not alone in its threats. Thomas L. Clingman, in a letter to his constituents early in the campaign, had pointed out the seriousness of the crisis in national affairs. The object of the Republican party, he told them, was "the total abolition of slavery, the raising of the negroes to equality with us, and the amalgamation of the white and black races." Should the South submit to the election of a Republican president it could expect no more than "the condition of a conquered province."[52] Later in the contest, he again advised the

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Carolina Standard, July 16, 1856; see also editorial of Rutherfordton *Western Eagle,* quoted in *ibid.,* July 2, 1856.

[48] Francis L. Hawks to John D. Whitford, August 14, 1856, John D. Whitford Collection.

[49] September 17, 1856.

[50] September 24, 1856.

[51] October 25, 1856; although not so extreme as the *North Carolina Standard,* the *Western Democrat* (Charlotte) took a strong Southern position; see for example, October 7, 1856.

[52] Letter quoted in full in *North Carolina Standard,* April 2, 1856

voters of his district that "the success of the black republican candidate, with its necessary consequences, will most probably be fatal to the existence of the government."[53] In October, Clingman revealed unmistakably his secession views. He advised a committee of citizens of Charlotte that in the event of Frémont's election he would come to Charlotte shortly thereafter. He stated, furthermore, that should the Republican be successful, the secession of any one or all of the Southern states would be justifiable.[54]

Governor Bragg, in his discussions during the gubernatorial campaign, likewise took a strong Southern stand. At Wilmington, he declared that much as he loved the Union the occurrence of certain contingencies "would impose upon him paramount duties to his State."[55] At Tarboro, he said that should the Republican party succeed "based as it was upon the idea of the inferiority of the slaveholding to the non-slaveholding States, of course the dissolution of the Union was almost inevitable."[56]

During the course of the campaign, several events occurred which served to increase excitement in the state. The Hedrick case and the Brooks-Sumner affair increased the tension and made more apparent the enmity between the North and South.[57] An event which attracted considerable attention and seemed to give credence to the threats of secession in the event of Frémont's election was the meeting of the governors of three Southern states in Raleigh October 13. Governor Henry Wise of Virginia, ultra-Southern in his views, invited the governors of the other Southern states to meet in a conference at Raleigh to decide the proper policy for the South to adopt should Frémont be elected president.[58] The professed purpose of the visit was to attend the state fair; however, since the governors left the city the day before the opening of the fair, it is probable that they had other intentions. The only firsthand account of

[53] Letter to his constituents, June 20, 1856, quoted in full in *ibid.*, July 2, 1856.

[54] Letter quoted in full in *North Carolina Whig,* November 1, 1856 and in *Fayetteville Observer,* October 18, 1856.

[55] *North Carolina Standard,* July 23, 1856.

[56] *Southerner,* July 12, 1856.

[57] For a discussion of these events, see *supra,* Chapter VI.

[58] H. T. Shanks, *The Secession Movement in Virginia,* p. 53.

the actual meeting is that by Pulaski Cowper, Governor Bragg's secretary, who was present at the conference:

> An informal meeting was held in the parlors at the Executive Mansion. Among others were present General L. O'B. Branch, Wesley Jones, A. M. Lewis, M. A. Bledsoe, Jos. A. Engelhard and Pulaski Cowper. . . . Governor Wise was warm and determined in his views, and favored immediate resistance, by fighting in the Union, in the event of Fremont's election, and that his election should be accepted as the overt act. Governor Bragg's position was by no means ultra, but quite conservative, and his views were calmly stated, and his sound reason, prudence, and wise counsel produced a deep impression.[59]

Only the governors of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina attended and no definite action was taken.[60] Nevertheless, the meeting was severely criticized by the *Raleigh Register* which announced that "The People of North Carolina . . . will not follow the lead of any set of fanatical zealots, who would break up this consecrated UNION of ours."[61] The Democratic press denied the charge of the *Register,*[62] declaring that things had reached "a queer pass when two Southern gentlemen" could not visit the state fair "without having their conduct and motives pried into and misrepresented by every whipper-snapper correspondent of the associated press." Moreover, in the opinion of the *Wilmington Journal,* the times demanded consultation by the authorities of the Southern states.[63] The

[59] Pulaski Cowper, "Thomas Bragg," p. 132. This account was written many years later and may possibly contain errors in details; in general, however, it accords with practically all contemporary accounts of the meeting.

[60] The Baltimore *American Democrat* poked fun at the meeting in the following comment: "This affair seems to have turned out pretty much as anticipated. . . . It was a complete Geoffrey Hudson pie. When the crust was broken, not one, but *three* most ridiculous dunces crept out. . . . The traitors turned out to be beneath the dignity of a halter. It would be a waste of hemp to hang such poor creatures." Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* November 15, 1856.

[61] October 15, 1856. Governor Wise replied to the charges of the *Register* in an interesting letter which revealed his ultra news; letter quoted in full in *North Carolina Standard,* October 25, 1856.

[62] *North Carolina Standard,* October 22, 1856.

[63] Quoted in the *Southerner,* November 1, 1856, and in the *North Carolina Standard,* October 25, 1856.

only purpose served by the meeting was to excite further an already tense situation.

In spite of the secession sentiments of many political leaders in the state, it is not probable that the masses of the people contemplated a dissolution of the Union. Indeed, a large proportion was not aware of any grave danger to the Union.[64] The Know-Nothing press insisted that the election of Frémont "would form no ground for a dissolution of the Union" and that the Americans and Whigs could not be led into any such movement.[65] The leaders of the American party rebuked those who contemplated secession.[66] Kenneth Rayner, prominent American leader, wrote that the people of the South had no intention of dissolving the Union in the event of Frémont's election.[67]

The election of Buchanan and the defeat of the "black republican" candidate was received with rejoicing in the state.[68] "'Great but unknown dangers' have been passed," proclaimed the *North Carolina Standard,* "and the Union, for the present at least, is safe."[69] However, mixed with the joy was a note of apprehension for the future.[70] Political leaders could not overlook the tremendous vote polled in the North by the Republican party. Weldon N. Edwards, time-honored leader of the Democracy in North Carolina, wrote significantly: "I look with fearful

[64] H. M. Shaw, Democratic congressman from North Carolina, made the following comment on the apparent indifference of the people: "I confess to you I look with amazement upon the stolid indifference and the apathy with which the people of the South contemplate the fearful struggle that is now going on between the friends of the South & the Rights of the States on the one hand and the deadly enemies of both in the other. It seems to me that nothing short of the final catastrophe can arouse them from the lethargy into which they are sunk—God save the South & the Union if possible." Shaw to T. D. McDowell, September 17, 1856, C. B. Heller Collection.

[65] *North Carolina Whig,* October 7, 1856; *Raleigh Register,* October 15, 1856.

[66] Speech of William A. Graham at Concord, October 21, quoted in *Raleigh Register,* November 5, 1856.

[67] Rayner to a Gentleman in Philadelphia, October 25, 1856, *ibid.,* November 19, 1856.

[68] Democrats of Raleigh held a meeting on November 18 to rejoice over the Democratic victory, *North Carolina Standard,* November 26, 1856.

[69] November 12, 1856.

[70] Message of Governor Bragg to the General Assembly, November 17, 1856, *Legislative Documents 1856-57,* Document No. 1.

apprehensions to the struggle four years hence—there will be much more of tumult and peril in it than in that through which we have just passed."[71] A North Carolinian, writing from New York, advised "only let it be understood at home that the agitation here [in the North] is not going to cease, nor is the evil crushed to death by Mr. Buchanan's election."[72]

The election of 1856, through the size of the Republican vote, revealed to the South more than ever before the extent of Northern hostility to slavery. Political observers concluded that it was only a question of four years, or at the most eight, before this "abolition" party would elect the president. The idea that events were moving toward an inevitable dissolution of the Union became implanted in the minds of many.[73] Along with this apprehension there was present among the ultras of the state a determination to maintain the rights of the South at all hazards. The *North Carolina Standard* warned that before the Southerners would "submit to the rule" of the Republican party, "they will put their shoulders, like Sampson, to the pillars of the temple and crush it to the earth."[74] Governor Bragg, in his message to the legislature in November, declared that the Southern people would never "submit tamely and ignominiously" to a Union so "perverted from its legitimate purposes as to become an instrument of oppression or degradation."[75]

[71] Edwards to an unnamed member of Congress from North Carolina, November 19, 1856, Miscellaneous Papers, Series One, 1830-1861. In another part of the letter, he wrote: "I confess I see not many crumbs of comfort in the state of the vote—and but little to inspire a hope that our troubles are to cease. But four States—north of M's & D's line have proclaimed the right—while a large numerical vote—approaching nearly a majority—and *designedly*—I think—sectional—has been cast in favor of the pretensions of a candidate and leaders who have outlawed fifteen states of the Union. The villainous compound which has worked such a result is now allowed time to consolidate."

[72] Francis L. Hawks to John H. Bryan, December 11, 1856, John H. Bryan Papers, Raleigh.

[73] "Our countrymen cannot learn too soon," wrote Francis L. Hawks, the historian, "that they have to take care of themselves . . . the only question as to the breaking up [of] the Confederacy is, I am afraid, one of *time* only. I want my countryman to be prepared for such a terrible contingency." Hawks to John H. Bryan, December 11, 1856, John H. Bryan Papers, Raleigh.

[74] December 24, 1856.

[75] *Legislative Documents 1856-57,* Doc. No. 1, p. 2.

Southern Democrats were disposed in 1857 to accept the Buchanan administration as a safe protector of Southern Rights. Buchanan's inaugural address was highly pleasing to the South because of its favorable views on slavery.[76] Except for a momentary dissatisfaction over the administration's policy toward Kansas in 1857, the Democrats of the state retained their confidence in the administration.[77] Early in 1858, Henry W. Miller, former prominent Whig of Wake County, announced his support of Buchanan and his intention to act in the future with the Democratic party because of its opposition to "Black Republicanism."[78]

The South was further reassured on the question of its rights by the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Case early in 1857. The effect of the decision in respect to the territorial question was to declare that Congress had no power to exclude slavery from the territories. The decision, being in accord with the position of the Southern Democrats, was well received in the state. The *North Carolina Standard* pronounced it "the most important decision ever made by any Court in the country" and one which "fortifies as by a wall of brass the rights of the slaveholder in the States and in the common territories."[79] Although the decision was of vital significance, it attracted comparatively little attention in North Carolina,[80] probably because the territorial issue was quiescent at that time.

The joy in the defeat of Frémont and the faith in Buchanan by no means weakened the Southern Rights movement. Early in 1857, the *Asheville News* advised the people that "nothing short of the thorough and complete union of the Southern States

[76] *North Carolina Standard,* March 11, 1857.

[77] The Democratic members of the legislature at a party caucus unanimously adopted a resolution expressing confidence in Buchanan's administration and thanking him for his fidelity to the Constitution and to the rights of the states. *North Carolina Standard,* December 8, 1858.

[78] J. G. deR. Hamilton, *Party Politics,* pp. 187-188.

[79] March 11, 1857.

[80] The author of this study has been unable to find a single reference to the Dred Scott decision in all the manuscript material used in the preparation of this work. Nor did the decision receive more than passing notice in the press.

will enable us to defend our position and maintain our rights."[81] Addressing the Democrats of Wake County in April, L. O'B. Branch, Democratic member of Congress, said that the time was rapidly drawing near "when Southern men must battle with other weapons than reason and argument for their ordinary rights of free men in this Confederacy."[82] Similar opinions were expressed by many other speakers.[83] W. W. Holden, in addressing the State Educational Association, said that one of the needs of the state was a military school for the rights of the South "must be defended in the last resort, by every drop of blood and by every ounce of treasure that we have."[84] This consciousness of the need for defending the rights of the South was instrumental in the defeat for re-election to Congress of R. C. Puryear, American, who had opposed the Kansas-Nebraska bill.[85]

The slavery controversy again became intense late in 1857 when Kansas applied for admission into the Union with the Lecompton pro-slavery constitution. County Democratic meetings early in 1858 advocated the admission of Kansas[86] and a resolution of the State Democratic Convention read as follows: we "regard that measure as essential to the quiet of the country, and an act of simple justice; the rejection of which can only be viewed as a blow aimed at the equality of the States in the Union."[87] State Democratic leaders also expressed the opinion that the admission of Kansas was highly important to the South.[88] H. M. Shaw, Democratic member of Congress, thought that the rejection of Kansas would justify secession.[89]

[81] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* January 21, 1857.

[82] *North Carolina Standard,* April 8, 1857.

[83] See for example speeches by Asa Biggs and Henry W. Miller, *ibid.,* May 27, July 8, 1857.

[84] *Ibid.,* August 5, 1857.

[85] The principal opposition to Puryear in the campaign was based upon his unsoundness on Southern Rights, *North Carolina Standard,* May 20, June 3, August 26, 1857.

[86] *Ibid.,* January-March, 1858; see for example resolutions of meetings in Gaston, Brunswick, and Warren counties. *Ibid.,* March 3, 10, 1858. These meetings did not, however, show any great alarm over the issue.

[87] *Ibid.,* April 21, 1858.

[88] Letter of Asa Biggs to a Lecompton meeting in Baltimore, *North Carolina Standard,* March 31, 1858.

[89] Thos. Bragg to H. M. Shaw, March 31, 1858, Thomas M. Pittman Collection.

On the other hand, there were those who could not see that the admission of Kansas with the Lecompton constitution would be a triumph for the South since the legislature of Kansas would call a convention which would disregard the interests of slave owners. John A. Gilmer, American representative in Congress, reached this conclusion. Moreover, he thought that the admission of Kansas with the Lecompton constitution would make the Republican party omnipotent in the free states, enabling it to sweep everything before it in the next presidential election. Holding such views, he decided to oppose its admission.[90] Accordingly he spoke against the bill, denying that it was a test as to whether a slave state would be admitted to the Union.[91] Gilmer was severely condemned by the Democrats for his action.[92] Governor Bragg likewise did not think that the admission of Kansas was a test as to whether a state would be denied admission on account of slavery. For this reason he was opposed to any attempt at secession should Kansas be refused admission into the Union. If, however, a clear case of rejection of a state on account of slavery was presented, he did not think the South should submit to it. Furthermore, the question of slavery in Kansas would be settled in Kansas regardless of the attitude of Congress toward the admission of the state.[93]

The masses of the people in the state never became greatly excited over the Kansas question.[94] It was difficult to convince them that their interests were threatened by the failure to establish slavery in a distant state. Nor did the majority regard the

[90] Gilmer to W. A. Graham, February 23, 1858, Wm. A. Graham Papers. Gilmer represented the fifth district, composed of Person, Caswell, Alamance, Chatham, Randolph, Guilford, Moore, and Montgomery counties, where the support of slavery was lukewarm.

[91] *Cong. Globe,* 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 282-285.

[92] *North Carolina Standard,* April 7, 1858.

[93] Thomas Bragg to H. M. Shaw, March 31, 1858, Thomas M. Pittman Collection. This letter reveals some significant facts as to the attitude of the Democrats toward the admission of Kansas. Many of them, at least from North Carolina, were not so much concerned about the threat to the South which lay in the rejection of Kansas but feared the disorganization which its failure would produce in the Democratic party.

[94] "Not a particle of the excitement prevails among any class of our people which seems to agitate Congress." Jonathan Worth to John A. Gilmer, March 9, 1858, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Jonathan Worth,* I, 55.

rejection of Kansas with the Lecompton constitution as conclusive proof that a state would not be admitted into the Union because of slavery. There were some, however, who thought that the attitude of the North on this issue showed that it had determined "to use the power of the federal government to circumscribe and *restrict,* if not to *abolish,* slavery."[95] This group became more uncompromising than ever in its support of the institution.

The effect of the excitement created by the struggle over the admission of Kansas was a renewed discussion of Southern Rights. Senator Asa Biggs, speaking in the Senate, March 15, 1858, declared that the Southern states would never consent to remain in the Union in a position of inferiority. North Carolina, he said, "will *never—never!* submit to such a degradation, that would humiliate her in her own estimation, and disgrace her in the eyes of the world."[96] John Kerr, member of Congress, delivered a fiery address at the State Democratic Convention, April 14, in which he urged the Southern people to insist upon equality or dissolution. Although he loved the Union and hoped that it might be perpetuated, "when it became an instrument of oppression to his people, *he would strike it down.*" His address aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the delegates and received repeated bursts of applause.[97]

The rejection of Kansas made more apparent the fact that the power of the slave states in the federal congress was declining while each new free state admitted in the future would add strength to the anti-slavery movement.[98] Resolutions adopted

[95] W. W. Peebles to H. M. Shaw, April 3, 1858, Thomas M. Pittman Collection.

[96] *Cong. Globe,* 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, pp. 115-116.

[97] *North Carolina Standard,* April 21, 1858.

[98] Indicative of the South's fear of an anti-slavery majority was the following expression of ultra-Southern views in a letter of A. T. Chesson of eastern North Carolina to H. M. Shaw, May 4, 1858, Thos. M. Pittman Collection: ". . . is there to be no end to the Slavery agitation is it to continue untill [*sic*] the South wearied and degraded will finally consent to yield her equality and seek that of a fawning like spittle crawling through her own slime to the foot of Northern power for such surely will be her fate if she permits a cordon of free States to be thrown around her.

"Sir I speake [*sic*] for myself and for no other person or party to such degradation to such servile dependence and bondage no earthly con-

at a meeting composed of representatives from the slaveholding counties of Greene and Lenoir stated: 1. that the future held only prospects of "a continuation of federal encroachments on the South, and a constant disregard and practical violation of our dearest interests and constitutional rights"; 2. that the South could not depend on the federal government to protect its interests; in witness thereof the following facts were given: no more slave states would be added to the Union, the admission of Kansas would only add "rank abolitionists" to the Senate and House, and the fugitive slave law has been flagrantly disregarded; 3. that the warfare of the North upon slavery would grow more intense until the institution was annihilated; 4. and that Governor Bragg be requested to lay these facts before the legislature and urge them "to institute measures of self defense."[99]

In his inaugural address, January 1, 1859, Governor John W. Ellis made no threats of secession; yet he showed himself to be aware of the aggressions upon the institutions of his section. "We are not prepared," he said, "for the acknowledgment that we cannot enjoy all our constitutional rights in the Union. Should that day unfortunately come, but little doubt need be entertained that our people will act as best comports with their interests and honor and with the sacred memories of the past, to whatever the result may lead."[100] This was, perhaps, an accurate reflection of public opinion on the subject. Ellis' personal views were probably much more extreme.[101]

The Democratic press in 1859 renewed its insistence upon unity in the South in defense of Southern Rights.[102] The *Charlotte Bulletin* urged "an abandonment of party lines and a complete union in the South for the protection of its rights and

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siderations will ever make me submit no sir not for the *Union* for it would be not a Union of free and independent States but one of bondage maid [*sic*] more intense and oppressive by the numerical majority."

[99] *North Carolina Standard,* May 26, 1858.

[100] *House Journal 1858-59,* pp. 219-220; *North Carolina Standard,* January 5, 1859; *Raleigh Register,* January 12, 1859.

[101] There is no definite proof of this; however, Ellis' associations and his later actions would certainly indicate that he was strongly pro-Southern in his views.

[102] *North Carolina Standard,* May 11, 1859.

institutions."[103] The *Raleigh Register*, organ of the opposition party, was equally insistent upon defending the rights of the South, but could see no reason why the Democratic party should be relied upon to protect them.[104] Both parties were agreed by this time that the most significant problem in federal affairs was the preservation of Southern Rights. Leading Democrats were generally more extreme in their views than the Whigs and occasionally showed no hesitation in predicting that a Republican success in 1860 would mean a dissolution of the Union. The *North Carolina Standard* stated that a "Black Republican" triumph in 1860 "*will and ought* to sound the knell of this Union."[105] Thomas Ruffin, Democratic member of Congress, publicly declared in July, 1859, that in the event of the election of a Republican president he "was in favor of N. C. assuming her Sovereignty and proclaiming resistance to Federal authority under such rule."[106] The tendency, as yet, however, was for both parties to avoid a discussion of secession and to emphasize the maintenance of Southern Rights in the Union.

Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois had been held in high esteem by political leaders in the South since his championship of the Kansas-Nebraska act. His popularity with this group, however, quickly declined when he opposed the admission of Kansas with the Lecompton constitution.[107] The Southern press bitterly denounced him.[108] The *Elizabeth City Pioneer* declared that "Lucifer's descent to his eternal home was not more rapid than that of Stephen A. Douglas from the confidence and esteem of the Democracy."[109] Most denunciatory of all was the *North Carolina Standard,* which, upon the enunciation of Douglas' so-called Freeport doctrine, stated: "He has fallen—swept away

[103] Quoted in *Raleigh Register,* September 7, 1859.
[104] October 12, 1859. [105] September 15, 1858.
[106] *Southerner,* August 6, 1859. Ruffin represented the second district, composed of Hyde, Beaufort, Pitt, Craven, Jones, Lenoir, Wayne, Greene, Edgecombe, Onslow and Carteret counties, in which the plantation-slavery regime was well established.
[107] David S. Reid to Mrs. Reid, December 11, 1857, D. S. Reid Papers, IV, 1856-1880.
[108] *Wilmington Journal,* December 11, 1857; *Raleigh Register,* August 3, 1859.
[109] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* August 18, 1858.

by the strong current of anti-slavery, anti-Southern and anti-Constitution fanaticism. If a friend now, he is an unreliable one. If a foe, he is a secret one. . . . He has sunk because he could not command. The same feeling dethroned the first angel in Heaven, and turned him into a Devil."[110]

The Dred Scott decision, the struggle over the admission of Kansas, and Douglas' position on slavery in the territories projected the territorial issue into the political limelight in 1859. Whig leaders in the state were willing to allow the "Law of soil & climate" to settle the question of slavery in the territories and seemed disposed to regard the question as settled "unless new fuel shall be found for the flame."[111] The Democracy likewise seemed to regard soil and climate as the main determinants of the status of slavery in the territories.[112] Douglas' enunciation of his "squatter sovereignty" doctrine, however, forced the party to take account of his position. The North Carolina Democrats were not as extreme in their position as the ultras of the lower South. The *North Carolina Standard* opposed the doctrine that Congress should legislate positively to protect slavery in the territories, declaring that *"Congress will never grant it."* Moreover, should the Southern Democrats require the Northern wing of the party to adopt such a position in 1860 the result would be the complete defeat of the Northern Democracy.[113] The North Carolina Democrats favored the policy of non-intervention by Congress; that is, that the territories should decide for themselves at the time of their organization as states whether or not they desired slavery.[114] This was not an endorsement of Douglas' position. Douglas held that the territories could legally exclude slavery. The Democrats in the South denied this, saying that there was no legal power in a territory to exclude slavery until it organized as a state. This position, they held, was the true principle of non-intervention

[110] September 15, 1858.

[111] Wm. A. Graham to the Whig Committee of New York City, February 21, 1859, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[112] *North Carolina Standard,* March 23, 1859.

[113] March 23, 1851.

[114] *North Carolina Standard,* April 13, 1859; the Charlotte *Western Democrat* took the same position.

held by the Democratic party and enunciated by the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott decision. Southerners of both parties condemned Douglas' policy.[115] Already there had appeared among Southern Democrats a disposition to distrust the Northern wing of the party because of its opposition to slavery.

The course of events from 1853 to 1859 was of great importance in the final determination of secession sentiment in North Carolina. Although the masses of the people had as yet shown no significant secession sentiment, they had sensed the grave significance of the growing hostility between North and South. More important, many of their leaders had already become apprehensive lest the rights of the South be destroyed in a Union dominated by an anti-slavery majority. These leaders had become convinced by 1859 that the "abolition crusade" would continue to grow until the sectional, anti-slavery, Republican party gained control of the government. The institutions of the South would then be completely at the mercy of an anti-slavery majority.

[115] *Charlotte Bulletin* (Democratic) quoted in *Raleigh Register*, October 19, 1859; *Raleigh Register*, June 22, 1859; *North Carolina Standard*, September 7, 1859.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CRISIS OF 1859-1860

Although many political leaders had by 1859 reached the conclusion that the only safety for Southern civilization lay in a withdrawal of the South from the Union, some practical demonstration of the effect of Northern hostility was necessary to arouse the masses of the people. John Brown's raid in October, 1859 provided such a demonstration. The people of North Carolina were more genuinely alarmed by the attempted insurrection at Harpers Ferry than by any other event prior to the election of Lincoln in 1860.

The North Carolina press carried full accounts of the John Brown foray and the people in all parts of the state were appraised of the events as they occurred until the execution of Brown. At first, the tendency was to regard the insurrection as "the work of a wretched lunatic and fanatic; and a handful of desperadoes" who would be condemned by the law-abiding citizens of North and South alike.[1] This attitude prevailed only momentarily, however. As soon as it was known that prominent abolitionists were involved in the plot, the alarm among the people became more intense and widespread. The raid was no longer viewed as the work of a lone fanatic, but as the designed plot of the abolitionists.[2] The *Wilmington Journal* remarked "that the abolitionists of the North stop not with stealing and political robbery—they would resort to actual violence on our own soil."[3] The conservative *Raleigh Register* observed:

[1] *Raleigh Register,* October 26, 1859. Charles Pettigrew, in New York at the time, wrote his wife, October 30, 1859: "The Harper's Ferry difficulty made so little impression, that I had matters of more interest with which to fill my letter." Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[2] The *Raleigh Register,* October 29, 1859, stated that "it was the premature outbreak of a conspiracy, in which many more than Brown and his banditti were engaged."

[3] October 28, 1859.

"These disclosures are 'startling' indeed, and show a settled determination on the part of the abolitionists to leave no means untried to deprive the South of its slave property, and to let no cost of blood stand in the way of the attempt."[4] Slave insurrections were feared by the people of the South and in the slave areas of the state there was for a time intense alarm among the people. One woman wrote to her husband "I only feel, God have mercy upon us. Such revelations make one realize how insecure is our situation—I fear for the future."[5] There was grave apprehension in the comment of another North Carolinian "Where will this thing of abolition end? . . . There is something in the word 'Harper's Ferry' that sounds harshly upon my ear! Look how the thing is spreading & magnifying. I fear it portends evil, & nothing but evil."[6] Another contemporary wrote that "nothing, but God's providence can keep us from ruin."[7]

It was not so much the raid itself which created alarm for the safety of Southern institutions, but rather the widespread sympathy for Brown which soon became manifest in the North. As Brown's body passed through the cities of the North, bells were tolled and prayers were offered. Only three votes prevented the Senate of Massachusetts from adjourning in his honor. Such notables as Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Reverend Jacob M. Manning, Wendell Phillips, and Governor John A. Andrews of Massachusetts commemorated him in speeches at Boston,[8] and his hanging was likened to the crucifixion of Christ.[9] The *Wilmington Journal* declared that "the tone of the Northern press [showed] . . . the sympathy of that section with 'old Brown' and his aiders." The tone of the Northern press, it stated, was one "of menace and domineering . . . apparently intended to arouse feelings of hatred against the South, as well as

[4] November 2, 1859.

[5] Caroline Pettigrew to Charles Pettigrew, October 30, 1859, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill; see also her letter of October 24, 1859.

[6] J. B. Cherry to Calvin H. Wiley, November 13, 1859, Calvin H. Wiley Papers.

[7] Charles L. Pettigrew to Wm. S. Pettigrew, November 18, 1859, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[8] O. G. Villard, *John Brown*, pp. 559-560.

[9] J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, II, 211.

. . . to exasperate that section."[10] The Northern press "consider us a poor doomed dependent people," wrote one contemporary, who "exist by their sufferance."[11] The *Wilmington Journal* warned the people of the South that the abolitionists intended "to start a conflagration that may end in widespread ruin and devastation."[12] Henry K. Burgwyn, prominent planter of Northampton County, after a five-weeks visit in Massachusetts and New York, reported that the majority of the people in the Northeast were not disposed to give the South her "full just & equal rights" and that he could not see "any way by which our glorious Union is to be preserved."[13]

One of the most visible evidences of the alarm felt throughout the state was the widespread attention given to military defense.[14] The *Raleigh Register,* in calling attention to the lack of Southern preparedness, stated that there should be at least three arsenals in the state as well as a well-equipped and efficient military company in every county.[15] Governor Ellis twice applied to the War Department for arms "to put into the hands of the militia [in order to quiet] . . . the sense of insecurity prevailing among the people."[16] Several public meetings requested the governor to call a special session of the legislature in order to put the state in a position of military defense.[17] One citizen asserted that, if the South did not arm, its doom was sealed. "We can only keep these people [fanatical abolitionists] back," he wrote, "by showing them we are prepared to defend ourselves when attacked by their lawless bands."[18]

Meanwhile, military companies were being formed in many

[10] November 18, 1859; see also November 25, 1859.

[11] Charles L. Pettigrew to Wm. S. Pettigrew, November 18, 1859, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[12] November 4, 1859.

[13] Burgwyn to L. O'B. Branch, December 31, 1859, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[14] See for example the *North Carolina Standard,* November 30, 1859.

[15] November 30, 1859.

[16] Governor's Letter Book, 1859-60, p. 159; *North Carolina Standard,* January 4, 1860.

[17] *North Carolina Standard,* December 28, 1859, January 18, 1860.

[18] Wm. S. Pettigrew to J. Johnston Pettigrew, November 29, 1859, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

counties in all parts of the state.[19] The work of organizing the companies continued into the early months of 1860. Typical of resolutions adopted by some of the county meetings were those of Wilson County which declared that efficient military organization was necessary in the South because of the "implacable hatred" exhibited by the North against the South, and "because the system of aggression, insult and spoliation embodied in the words 'irrepressible conflict' from being preached in theory, has, of late been practically inaugurated."[20]

Another evidence of the deep impression made upon the people by the Brown raid were the frequent discussions during the remainder of the year and in the early months of 1860 of the likelihood of disunion. Among the more conservative elements, there was a tendency to discount the effect of the incident upon Union sentiment. The Greensboro *Times* (independent) stated that "The disaffected, be they North or South, may writhe in excitement, but it will be of no avail. . . . The Union is still safe in the hands and hearts of the true."[21] It was the editorial opinion of this newspaper that neither North nor South was ready for disunion.[22] The *Newbern Progress* (Democratic) did not think that the strength of the Union would be impaired by the occurrence and predicted that the excitement would soon disappear.[23] Conservatives observed that public opinion generally favored peaceful relations with the North and opposed extreme action.[24] Indicative of this sentiment was the opinion of one contemporary that he was "not willing to disolve [*sic*] the union for any thing that Old Brown and his followers have done."[25] Former governor Charles Manly (Whig) wrote: "I don't think the country will *bust* up yet. The People will save it, in spite of Politicians, Demagogues and Fanatics. It can't be possible that the advocates of Treason,

[19] See letters in Governor's Papers 1859-60; *North Carolina Standard*, December, 1859-January, 1860.

[20] *Southerner*, December 10, 1859.

[21] November 26, 1859.

[22] December 17, 1859.

[23] December 6, 1859.

[24] Jonathan Worth to Rev. J. G. Ralston, November 5, 1859, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Jonathan Worth*, I, 82.

[25] W. K. Kearny to L. O'B. Branch, December 8, 1859, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

murder and stealing can overturn and destroy this great Confederacy."[26]

Although it is true that the Harpers Ferry event was not regarded as a sufficient cause for secession, it was viewed by many as a definite threat to the perpetuity of the Union. The *North Carolina Standard* warned the North that the people of the South would never submit to the election of such a man as Seward and that should such occur *"their minds are already made up"* as to what they would do.[27] To the South, it asserted that the time had come when the slave states must take their choice between a continuance of the Union and the prolonged existence of slavery.[28] The Tarboro *Southerner* declared that "The slaveholding States are prepared to separate from them [the Northern states] if their rights under the Constitution are not duly respected—and will soon be prepared to do so, 'peacebly [*sic*] if they can—forcibly if they must.' "[29] Even the *Raleigh Register* (Whig) stated that should a Black Republican be elected president, which was probable, such an event "would be the signal for the immediate secession of the South from the Union."[30]

Some were convinced that the two sections could never find peace and tranquility under the same government and that consequently it would be better for them to separate.[31] Indicative of this sentiment was the comment of one who had "always been a fervid Union man" that the people in his section (Warren County), even the most moderate, were "willing to take the chances of every probable evil that may arise from disunion, sooner than submit any longer to Northern insolence and Northern outrage."[32] Many began for the first time to consider seriously the possibility of secession.[33]

[26] Manly to Thomas Ruffin, December 25, 1859, J. D. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Ruffin Papers,* III, 59.

[27] November 16, 1859; the *Washington State* took the same position, quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* November 2, 1859.

[28] December 28, 1859. [29] December 17, 1859. [30] November 23, 1859.

[31] H. K. Burgwyn, Application for Pardon.

[32] Wm. A. Walsh to L. O'B. Branch, December 12, 1859, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham; see also this letter for a revealing description of public opinion in Warren County, a large slaveholding area.

[33] There was much truth in the following editorial of the *Wilmington Journal,* December 8, 1859:

Irrespective of its effect upon Union sentiment in the state, the John Brown raid produced among conservatives and radicals alike a determination that the rights of the South must be maintained at all hazards. Democratic meetings in several large slaveholding counties adopted resolutions declaring that they would maintain the equal rights of the South "even to the deplorable result" of disunion.[33a] The Democrats of Brunswick resolved that "*the day of compromise* has passed" and that "*A united South should demand all her rights under the Constitution, and submit to nothing less.*"[34] The conservative Whig, William A. Graham, wrote that he would cooperate with no party "which does not recognize the legitimate rights of the South."[35] Another North Carolinian wrote that if the John Brown foray united the South in a determination to develop its resources and attain economic independence of the North it would be the means of preserving the Union.[36]

Since the legislature was not in session in 1859, it fell to the governor and the council of state to express the official attitude of the state toward the attempted insurrection at Harpers Ferry. Meeting on December 7, the council adopted resolutions which, among other things, declared: 1. that North Carolina was prepared at all times to sustain Virginia in its efforts to defend the rights of the slaveholding states; 2. that "if we cannot hold our slave property, and at the same time enjoy repose and tranquility in the Union, we will be constrained, . . . to establish new forms and provide new guards for our security

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"Thinking men now begin to regard a dissolution as an approaching necessity, and a most painful necessity at that; . . . The country is fast becoming two nations. . . . Mutual exasperation is taking the part of mutual love and confidence. . . . There is then reason for pause when people come to look the alternatives [Union or disunion] calmly in the face, and there is something ominous in the present apparent lull, combined with so much settled resolution. People have looked the alternatives calmly in the face have paused and have made up their minds."

[33a] See resolutions of meetings in Wake, Nash, Gates, and New Hanover counties, *North Carolina Standard,* November 30, 1859, *Wilmington Journal,* December 15, 1859.

[34] *North Carolina Standard,* January 11, 1860.

[35] Graham to John H. Bryan, December 16, 1859, John H. Bryan Papers, Raleigh.

[36] F. L. Hawks to E. J. Hale, January 23, 1860, E. J. Hale Papers.

and well being"; 3. that the governor be urged to cause the effective organization of the state militia and volunteer companies; and, 4. that the governor be requested to take action to forbid postmasters from delivering incendiary papers and books.[37] These resolutions were probably an accurate reflection of the opinion at the time of the majority of the people in the state.

The excitement created by the John Brown raid was intensified by two other contemporary events. The first was the discovery that copies of Helper's *Impending Crisis* were being circulated in the state. Popular feeling was intensely excited by the case of Reverend Daniel Worth, and several ministers were driven from the state for disseminating "incendiary literature."[38] The second was the prolonged and heated contest over the election of a speaker for the House of Representatives.

When the Thirty-sixth Congress met December 5, 1859, only three days after the execution of Brown, the House of Representatives was composed of one hundred and nine Republicans, eighty-eight administration Democrats, thirteen anti-Lecompton Democrats, and twenty-seven Whigs or Americans.[39] Balloting for the election of speaker began immediately, one hundred and seventeen votes being necessary for election. After the results of the first ballot had been announced, members of both parties from the slaveholding states attempted to force upon the House a resolution that no one who had endorsed Helper's *Impending Crisis* was fit to be speaker. From the introduction of this resolution until the election of a speaker on February 10, there occurred one of the most exciting contests ever held in Congress. Debate was heated, threats of violence were frequent, and at times the House appeared more like an unruly mob than a parliamentary body. At least one North Carolina member participated in the threats. L. O'B. Branch

[37] *North Carolina Standard,* December 14, 1859; *Raleigh Register,* December 14, 1859.

[38] See *supra,* Chapter VI.

[39] F. E. Chadwick, *Causes of the Civil War, 1859-1861,* p. 90; E. D. Fite, *The Presidential Campaign of 1860,* p. 33. Both of these works contain good discussions of the speakership contest.

challenged Galusha A. Grow, Republican of Pennsylvania, to a duel, which the latter declined.[40]

On the twenty-ninth ballot there was a movement to break the deadlock and to compromise on John A. Gilmer of North Carolina, who received twenty-five votes on the thirty-fourth ballot.[41] The North Carolina Democrats were opposed to Gilmer, for he was an ardent Whig, moderate in his views, and was not regarded as "sound" on Southern Rights. One North Carolinian wrote that the Democrats, as much as they detested John Sherman of Ohio, would prefer his election to that of Gilmer, because "the election of any man from the South occupying the position which Gilmer does would inflict much greater injury upon us, by giving encouragement to the Black Republicans in their unholy warfare upon our rights."[42] Consequently, the Democrats, under the leadership of Warren Winslow, threw their support to W. N. H. Smith, Whig of North Carolina, who received one hundred and thirteen votes on the fortieth, forty-first, and forty-second ballots.[43] Smith was well liked by the Democrats of the state and was regarded as a "sound" Southern man.[44] In order to prevent the election of a Southerner, the Republicans dropped Sherman and concentrated on William Pennington, a member of the People's party of New Jersey, who with the aid of a few Northern Whig votes and several anti-Lecompton Democratic votes was elected on the forty-fourth ballot.[45] Many Whigs in the state were openly critical of the failure of the Whig members from North Carolina to join with the Democrats in support of Bocock of Virginia, in

[40] Branch to Galusha A. Grow, December 29, 1859; Grow to Branch, December 30, 1859, Mrs. L. O'B. Branch Papers, Raleigh.

[41] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 409.

[42] Will A. Jenkins to L. O'B. Branch, January 9, 1860, Mrs. L. O'B. Branch Papers, Raleigh. Gilmer was resentful of the action of the Democratic members of the North Carolina delegation and wrote that he might have been elected speaker had they not prevented it by "poisening the minds of their party against me." Gilmer to E. J. Hale, February 4, 1860, E. J. Hale Papers.

[43] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 634-635.

[44] W. S. Pettigrew to W. N. H. Smith, March 8, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[45] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 650.

order to show "an unbroken front to them [the Republicans] and a determination of supporting the South."[46]

The excitement in Congress had important repercussions in North Carolina. The hopes of the conservatives that the apprehension resulting from the Brown raid might be dispelled were definitely weakened. A friend from Bertie wrote Calvin H. Wiley, Superintendent of Common Schools: "The whole political horizon is overhung with black & lurid clouds, and I fear they may exhaust their violence upon people of this great Republic, involving them in hideous ruin & destruction."[47] The belief came to be widely held that the Union was in imminent danger.[48] The *Raleigh Register* observed: "If the South can close its eyes to the plots against its peace, and the numbers and malignity of the conspirators [who endorsed Helper's *Impending Crisis*] . . . then must it be given over to hopeless blindness and to that madness which goes before destruction."[49]

That secession sentiment in North Carolina was increased considerably by the exciting events which occurred in the latter part of 1859 and in January and February of 1860 is unmistakable. William S. Pettigrew, Whig planter of Washington County, wrote the editors of the *North American Review*, December 22:

> Deceive not yourselves, men of the North! Think not that the state of feeling at the South is to be despised! We are being convinced that it is your determination to crush us utterly by bloodshed (like that at Harper's Ferry) or by Legislative enactments. We will yield no further to your aggressions. Cease your constant hostility & you will find us true to the Union of these states. If not be assured it is the united determination of the South to defend itself to the last extremity.[50]

L. O'B. Branch was advised by one of his constituents that "A dissolution of the Union is now looked upon as highly probable,

[46] W. Caleb Brown to Z. B. Vance, December 24, 1859, Z. B. Vance Papers, Raleigh; John A. Engelhard to L. O'B. Branch, February 7, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[47] Unsigned letter, December 29, 1859, Calvin H. Wiley Papers.

[48] S. E. Williams to Gov. Ellis, January 31, 1860, Ellis Papers; writer in *Raleigh Register*, January 4, 1860.

[49] December 14, 1859.

[50] Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

even by conservative men, who have heretofore not allowed themselves to think of such a dreadful calamity."[51]

Thomas L. Clingman, most ultra-Southern of the North Carolina delegation in Congress, delivered a long speech in the Senate, January 16, which, considering the violent threats then being made by the Southern fire-eaters and his usual intense blustering manner, was remarkably calm. One writer has well characterized this speech as follows: "It is as if he were convinced of the hopelessness of his cause and were only bent on making a protest for the sake of posterity against a wrong the consummation of which was already fixed by destiny."[52] Although he expressed the hope that the Union would continue, he revealed clearly near the close of his speech his attitude toward the anti-slavery Republicans: "No other 'overt act' can so imperatively demand resistance on our part, as the simple election of their candidate. Their organization is one of avowed hostility, and they come against us as *enemies;* and should we submit, we shall be in the condition of an army which surrenders at discretion, and can only expect such terms as the humanity of the conqueror may grant."[53] The *Wilmington Journal,* while convinced that the Southern people were not yet ready for a dissolution *per se,* nevertheless thought that the impression was growing daily that the South could not enjoy its rights in the Union. Expressing itself as unalterably opposed to separate state secession, it proposed that a convention of all the Southern states be held, this convention to have the power to take measures for the protection of the rights of the South "even should a dissolution of the Union be deemed necessary to the furtherance of that object."[54]

In the early months of 1860 the opinion was frequently expressed by the Democrats that North Carolina would not submit to the election of a Republican president. The *North Carolina Standard* announced that should Seward be elected it would be ready "to dissolve every tie that binds North Carolina to the

[51] Will A. Jenkins to L. O'B. Branch, January 9, 1860, Mrs. L. O'B. Branch Papers, Raleigh.

[52] John Spencer Bassett, *Thomas L. Clingman,* pp. 61-62.

[53] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 455.

[54] December 22, 1859.

Union."[55] Democratic meetings in several counties declared that should the aggressions on the institutions of the South be continued, they would join the rest of the South in resistance.[56] The Democrats of Catawba, Lincoln, and Sampson counties indicated that they would consider the election of a Black Republican as evidence of continued aggression on the institutions of the South and sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union.[57] Sentiment in Warren and Duplin counties was also ultra-Southern.[58] The Democrats of Craven, Onslow, Jones, Lenoir, and Bladen counties while not so extreme in their threats yet made it clear that if the South could not attain its rights and peace in the Union it should secede.[59] The Wake County Workingmen's Association expressed itself as being "as willing and as prompt as any to maintain and defend Southern rights, even to the spilling of our blood."[60]

Union sentiment was much stronger among the old-line Whigs and in the sections of greatest Whig strength. The party press maintained that the Southern people were not ready for disunion,[61] and Whig county meetings expressed their opposition to the efforts of extremists to dissolve the Union.[62] In the counties of Guilford, Chatham, Orange, Moore, and Randolph, Union sentiment was strong. The Moore County Democrats declared their "attachment to the Union is as unswerving as ever."[63] Jonathan Worth, strong Union Whig of Randolph, wrote: "Amongst that portion of our people with whom I have

[55] February 1, 1860.

[56] See resolutions of a convention of the sixth congressional district, composed of the counties of Stokes, Forsyth, Rockingham, Davidson, Davie, Yadkin, Surry, Iredell, Alexander, and Ashe. *North Carolina Standard,* March 21, 1860. [57] *Ibid.,* February 8, 15, 1860.

[58] M. M. Ward to Thos. J. Green, January 20, 1860, Gen. Thos. J. Green Papers; *North Carolina Standard,* March 14, 1860.

[59] *Wilmington Journal,* January 26, 1860.

[60] *North Carolina Standard,* February 15, 1860. Frank I. Wilson, President of the Wake County Workingmen's Association, in a speech of February 6, 1860, said: "Already a Black Republican has been elected Speaker of the House of our national Representatives. Let it be followed by the election of a Black Republican President, and I am in favor of severing the few remaining ties that bind us to this Union." *Address delivered before the Wake County Workingmen's Association . . .,* p. 15.

[61] *Raleigh Register,* January 11, 1860, *et seq.;* see also *Fayetteville Observer,* January-February, 1860. [62] *Loc. cit.*

[63] *North Carolina Standard,* January 18, 1860.

intercourse 19/20 are calm and talk only of Union, not disunion." Even here, however, the people were suspicious of the North.[64]

The advocates of secession took advantage of the opportunity presented by the excited state of public opinion to inculcate disunion sentiment. "Columbus," in a series of articles published in the *Wilmington Journal,* discussed the question of "Union or Disunion." In the first article he stated that the Union was rapidly becoming a mere form and that the two sections were in principle and feeling "little short of two peoples." One section was madly seeking power which would terminate in the subjection of the other. The doctrine of an irrepressible conflict had already become a "portentous reality"; in proof of which he pointed to the fact that the churches had separated, that social intercourse between the sections was viewed suspiciously, and that the Northern people were opposed to the South and its institutions. In conclusion, he succinctly described the fatalism which underlay much of the thinking of the Southern extremists: ". . . the North is growing stronger and stronger, an [*sic*] we, alas! 'small by degrees, and beautifully less.' It may be very convenient and flattering doctrine to the North—this of '*the Union, the glorious Union!*' but as matters are now progressing, what is it but hugging us to death under pretense of a fraternal embrace."[65]

In the second article the writer called attention to the fact that the power and influence of the free states in the federal government would be increased by the addition of new states from the territories, and the policy of the free states was "*No more slave States into this Union.*" Such being the prospect, he asked: ". . . what hope can even the most sanguine and Union-loving of us all entertain, when this fanaticism seats itself in the Presidential chair, and wields the powers and the patronage of government? In that case, will there be any escape from the final *catastrophe,* the *irrepressible conflict,* so often predicted and gloried in by the apostles of Abolitionism?"[66]

[64] Worth to Hennys, Smith, and Townsend, February 15, 1860, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Worth,* I, 99.

[65] *Wilmington Journal,* January 12, 1860.

[66] January 19, 1860.

In his final article, the writer expressed the opinion that anti-slavery sentiment and hostility to Southern institutions were general in the North and they would probably increase in the future. With no possibility of gaining its rights in the Union, what course was there left for the South but a resort to secession?[67]

In March, Henry K. Burgwyn of Northampton discussed the problem of a Southern confederacy in a long letter which appeared in the *North Carolina Standard*. In justification for his choice of subject he stated that he who denied that a "dissolution of the Confederacy *is* threatening and imminently so, is blind." He was of the opinion that a Southern confederacy could attain the friendship of the nations of Europe because of its supply of raw products and its demand for manufactured goods. Moreover, such a confederacy would be able to maintain a high position among the nations of the world.

With striking foresight, he pointed out that a confederacy could be set up by means of a convention which would meet following the election of a Black Republican in November and the new nation would be under way before his inauguration in March, 1861. Should the North attempt to "whip the South back into the Union," it was foredoomed to failure because it would be unable to secure enough money to equip and maintain an army sufficient for such an undertaking. It was more probable, in his opinion, that the two confederacies would live peacefully side by side since the North was so dependent on the South for its prosperity.

The people of the South, he wrote, must soon come to realize that there could be no peace for them and no safety for their institutions in the Union. The people of the North were unalterably opposed to the institutions of the South and sympathized with the effort of John Brown. Finally, the homogeneity of the Southern people and the similarity of their interests would assure friendly relations in a Southern confederacy.[68]

Upon the events of 1859-1860 must be placed the responsibility for immeasurably increasing secession sentiment in North Carolina. Prior to John Brown's raid the masses of the

[67] February 23, 1860. [68] March 28, 1860.

people had never seriously considered the possibility of secession in practice. John Brown's raid, the exciting contest in the Thirty-sixth Congress, the disclosures of abolition activities in the state, and the apparent open hostility of the Northern people toward the South created an uneasiness which was never entirely dispelled during the following year. Substantial nonpolitical leaders were for the first time shown the practical results of abolition activity. In consequence, thousands of potential secessionists were created. It was, thus, in an atmosphere conducive neither to moderation nor to compromise that the presidential contest of 1860 occurred.

The Opposition Convention[69] assembled in Raleigh on February 22. Echoing the Union sentiment of the great majority of North Carolina Whigs, the platform expressed the conviction that a constitutional Union was the greatest protector of the rights of the people and declared "that we do not acquiesce in the necessity for a dissolution of the Union as a remedy for grievances now existing, or that in our belief are likely to occur."[70] William A. Graham, alarmed by the violent agitation and the threats of disunion had, early in February, attended a conference of former Whigs at Washington to plan for a national convention of the resuscitated Whig party.[71]

No such moderation characterized the State Democratic Convention which met in Raleigh, March 8. Governor Ellis, in addressing the convention, bitterly denounced the abolitionists and the leaders of the Republican party, likening them to murderers and assassins. "The abolition of slavery here at home is the design of our opponents," he warned the convention.[72] The resolutions adopted by the convention were strongly Southern. They denied the power of either Congress or a territorial legislature to amend or impair the constitutional right of any citizen to take his slave property into the common territories and hold

[69] After the disappearance of the Know-Nothing party, the Whigs in the state maintained a party organization which was usually called the Opposition by the Democrats.

[70] *North Carolina Standard,* February 29, 1860.

[71] Wm. A. Graham, Application for Pardon.

[72] John W. Ellis, *Speech to the Democratic Convention, March 9, 1860,* p. 4.

and enjoy it there; they asserted that the people of North Carolina would resist aggressions upon their rights "whenever the emergency arises"; and finally, they declared that the triumph of the Black Republican party "would be followed by continued bloody raids . . . upon all the border Southern States; that such collisions . . . would alone destroy that fraternal feeling between the sections, without which the Union cannot endure."[73]

In the weeks prior to the meeting of the National Democratic Convention at Charleston, North Carolina Democrats were not inclined to demand congressional protection of slavery in the territories and seemed content to accept a reaffirmation of the Cincinnati platform of 1856, which endorsed the principle of popular sovereignty. It was the opinion of experienced politicians that it would not do "for the South to adopt ultra measures on the territorial question—It is of too little practical importance to stand out on."[74] Although the majority of the Democrats in the state were still distrustful of Douglas, some felt that the South could trust him. Moreover, they argued, Douglas was the only man who could carry the Northern and Northwestern states.[75] Nevertheless, Douglas' pre-convention strength in the state was small. Although they hoped that harmony would prevail at Charleston, many had forebodings that dissension would appear in the convention.[76]

The North Carolina delegation to the Charleston Convention was predominantly conservative.[77] There were only a few extremists among the delegates, notably W. W. Avery of Burke, W. S. Ashe of New Hanover, and Thomas J. Green of Warren. The conservatives were led by W. W. Holden of Wake,[78] and

[73] *North Carolina Standard,* March 14, 1860.

[74] R. M. Saunders to L. O'B. Branch, January 25, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[75] Robt. P. Dick to T. D. McDowell, April 11, 1860, McDowell Papers; *Newbern Progress,* quoted in *Hillsborough Recorder,* April 4, 1860.

[76] D. M. Barringer to J. Johnston Pettigrew, April 10, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

[77] James Tate to Charles F. Fisher, April 23, 1860, Charles F. Fisher Papers.

[78] The action of Holden from the time of the Charleston Convention until the secession of North Carolina is difficult to explain. Until 1860 the leader of the ultra-Southern faction of the Democratic party in the state, he now began to shift his position, becoming first a supporter of Douglas

Bedford Brown of Caswell.[79] Holden and Brown attended several meetings of the delegates from the lower South and used

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and then of Breckinridge. After the election of Lincoln, he became one of the strongest Unionists in the state. Holden's championship of Southern Rights from 1847 to 1859 would lead one to expect him to join those Democratic leaders who advocated secession after the election of Lincoln. His failure to do that and the great fight which he waged through the *North Carolina Standard* against the withdrawal of North Carolina from the Union is one of the highly interesting and significant features of the secession movement in the state. Because of the tremendous influence of the *North Carolina Standard* among the Democratic masses, his opposition to secession was of primary importance. The explanation for his action probably lies in several events which occurred from 1858 to 1860. Having faithfully served the Democratic party as editor of the party journal for over ten years, Holden had every right to expect a reward in the form of a high political office. Consequently, his defeat for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1858 by John W. Ellis, largely through the influence of the party leaders, must have embittered him against them. Moreover, he could not have overlooked the frequent comments of the opposition press that he had been defeated by the aristocratic element in his party even though the majority of the Democrats preferred him. In 1858-1859 when both United States senatorships became vacant through the resignation of Asa Biggs and the expiration of David S. Reid's term, Holden was again overlooked and the offices were given to Thomas L. Clingman, who until 1852 had been a Whig, and Thomas Bragg. Apparently, Holden accepted his defeat in each case like a gentleman and continued to render nominal support to the party. Late in 1859 when ad valorem taxation of property was agitated in the state, he seemed inclined to favor the issue. The *Raleigh Register,* May 26, 1860, stated that Holden had told Moses A. Bledsoe, Democrat of Wake, chief advocate of the tax reform, that "he was all right on ad valorem" and that "the thing was bound to come!" Moreover, Frank I. Wilson, a leading figure in the Raleigh Workingmen's Association, which was advocating the reform, and editor of the *Ad Valorem Banner,* was a former associate editor of the *North Carolina Standard* and a close friend of Holden. For a time Holden remained neutral. He expressed no editorial opinion and pled for party harmony on the issue. As the opposition to the reform became more intense among the Democratic leaders, he saw that neutrality was impossible and that he must either break with the slaveholding element which dominated the Democratic party in the state or oppose ad valorem taxation. A firm believer in party loyalty, he chose the latter course and supported John W. Ellis, Democratic candidate for governor in 1860. Nevertheless, the ad valorem issue was influential in the ultimate break between Holden and the party leaders. On the subject of Southern Rights, the *North Carolina Standard* had been the leader of the Democratic press in the state. In 1850-1851 and in 1856, Holden had taken a position far in advance of the people. Early in 1860, he remained a proponent of Southern Rights, but he was not so immoderate on this issue as he had earlier been. Being to some extent an opportunist, he did not care

their influence to prevent "precipitate or hasty action" and the adoption of a demand for "Congressional protection for slavery in the Territories."[80] Thomas J. Green, most ultra of the North Carolina delegates, was invited by Yancey to participate in the caucuses of the delegates of the cotton states and was placed on a committee to write a "constitutional platform such as the South could stand upon." Since nearly all the North Carolina delegates were opposed to demanding congressional protection of slavery in the territories, he declined to act with the Southern extremists.[81]

W. W. Avery of North Carolina was chairman of the committee on resolutions and presented the majority report to the convention. This report specifically denied the power of Congress or of a territorial legislature to exclude slavery from a territory and demanded, on the other hand, that Congress protect "the rights of persons and property" in the territories. On the subject of congressional protection, Avery said, "We regard this principle as more important in its ultimate effects than any principle ever discussed before in America, so far as affects the future fate and destiny of the people of the South."[82] The North Carolina delegation joined the rest of the South in opposing the substitution of the minority for the majority report.[83]

The adoption of the minority report, which reasserted the Cincinnati platform of 1856, with the addition of a promise to

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to advance a cause upon which the people would not follow him. He prided himself upon being a tribune of the people. When, early in 1860, he concluded that the people of North Carolina would not countenance secession in the event of Lincoln's election, he determined to break with the ultra-Southern faction of the party. Holden's shift in 1860 from a championship of Southern Rights and possible secession to a defense of the Union is then to be explained probably by his disappointment at not receiving a political office, his realization of the division within the party between slaveholders and non-slaveholders, his opposition to the slaveholding group which dominated the party in the state, and his conviction that the people of North Carolina were opposed to actual secession.

[79] *North Carolina Standard*, May 9, 1860.

[80] *Ibid.*, May 9, 1860; W. W. Holden, *Memoirs*, pp. 9-12.

[81] Green to Wm. L. Yancey, April 22, 1860, Gen. Thos. J. Green Papers.

[82] *Proceedings of the Conventions at Charleston and Baltimore*, p. 49.

[83] M. Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860*, p. 63. For an excellent detailed account of the proceedings of the convention, see Dwight L. Dumond, *The Secession Movement 1860-1861*, Chap. III.

abide by the decisions of the Supreme Court on the subject of slavery in the territories, was followed by the withdrawal from the convention of the delegations of Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas, and Georgia.[84] The North Carolina delegates refused to join the bolt and by their action probably influenced the delegations from the border states to remain in the convention.[85] In the balloting, the North Carolina delegation voted thirteen times as a unit for R. M. T. Hunter, twelve times for Joseph Lane, and six times for D. S. Dickinson. Its vote was then divided between Lane and Douglas, the latter receiving the vote of R. P. Dick.[86] After efforts at a nomination had failed, the convention adjourned to meet again at Baltimore, June 18.

The Democrats of the state were greatly disappointed at the failure of the Charleston Convention to unite on a candidate and a platform pleasing to both the Northern and Southern wings of the party. Many feared that the breach in the party would result in Republican success and there was a disposition to denounce the extremists in the party.[87] The action of the delegation in refusing to leave the convention was quite generally approved. The great majority of the Democratic newspapers,[88]

[84] *Proceedings of the Convention,* pp. 118-129; D. L. Dumond, *op. cit.,* pp. 51-54.

[85] While the delegations from the cotton states were withdrawing, Holden, who had come to believe that the Yanceyites were plotting the destruction of the Union, briefly addressed the convention. He later summarized his remarks as follows: "I told the Convention that I had been sent there by the State of North Carolina, . . . that I could not be a party to any steps looking to disunion; that my party had sent me to maintain and preserve, and not destroy, the bonds of the Union; that by an immense majority the people of my State . . . 'would frown indignantly on the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which link together the various points.'" Boyd, ed., *Memoirs of Holden,* pp. 13-14.

[86] M. Halstead, *op. cit.,* pp. 85-91; J. G. deR. Hamilton, *Party Politics,* p. 198.

[87] Caroline Pettigrew to her mother, May 8, 1860, Wm. S. Pettigrew to James L. Petigru, May, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill; N. W. Woodfin to David L. Swain, May 17, 1860, Swain MSS.; *North Carolina Standard,* May 9, 1860.

[88] The *North Carolina Standard,* May 16, 1860, stated that with the exception of the Charlotte *Bulletin* the Democratic press approved the action of the delegates in remaining in the convention.

as well as numerous county meetings,[89] endorsed the delegation's action.

North Carolina Democrats, with some few exceptions,[90] thought the action of the seceding delegations precipitate and ill-advised. H. W. Miller of Raleigh wrote L. O'B. Branch, May 11: "I have not met the first man who justifies the *seceders* —on the contrary, their cause is universally condemned. Most speak of it as a . . . bold and arrogant attempt on the part of the extremists of the cotton states, to dictate to, and dragoon the whole South."[91] Nor was there much sentiment for the adoption of the ultra-Southern platform. The Democratic press and local meetings generally favored the policy of non-intervention on the territorial issue and opposed the doctrine of congressional protection.[92] L. O'B. Branch announced publicly his advocacy of non-intervention,[93] and observers were almost unanimous in the opinion that the people would be content with the Cincinnati platform.[94] It was the opinion of many that the adoption of an ultra-Southern platform would result in certain defeat for the party in November.[95] The willingness of North Carolina to

[89] *Ibid.*, May 30-June 13, 1860.

[90] The Charlotte *Bulletin* approved the action of the delegates; quoted in *Wilmington Journal*, May 17, 1860; an anonymous writer from Northampton County in the *North Carolina Standard*, May 30, 1860, and a Democratic meeting in Edenton also expressed approval, *North Carolina Standard*, July 4, 1860; Wm. S. Ashe, delegate to the convention, likewise expressed sympathy with the action of the seceders, *Wilmington Journal*, May 31, 1860.

[91] L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[92] *North Carolina Standard*, June 13, 1860; meetings in Wake, Robeson, and Surry favored non-intervention; *ibid.*, May 23, June 13, July 4, 1860.

[93] See his letter to his constituents, May 15, *ibid.*, June 27, 1860.

[94] H. J. Davis to L. O'B. Branch, June 15, 1860, H. W. Miller to L. O'B. Branch, June 8, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham; Miller to Branch, May 22, 1860, Mrs. L. O'B. Branch Papers, Raleigh.

[95] A most accurate and penetrating analysis of an advisable policy for the South to follow is the following one made by H. W. Miller, former prominent Whig who had joined the Democrats: "It is indeed *strange*, that men do not see that the cause of the South is to be weakened . . . by contending about an abstraction—wasting our energies over a useless issue. . . . *We* are looking to the outposts; when the citadel is assailed. We can not enduce the . . . slave holders to take that interest in the squabble about the territories, thousands of miles off, that they feel & will show, in the 'irrepressible conflict' as presented by Seward. As

accept a moderate platform and a compromise between the Northern and Southern wings of the party was reflected in the increased Douglas strength in the state following the Charleston Convention.[96] Four of the ten Democratic electors favored the nomination of Douglas, believing that the party stood a better chance of carrying the North with him as the standard bearer.[97] Both the *North Carolina Standard* and the *Newbern Progress* advocated his nomination.[98]

It was the hope of North Carolina that the Baltimore Convention would see the party again united with a candidate and platform acceptable to all factions in the party. Clingman expressed the hope that the "good and true men in every section of the country" would restore party harmony.[99] The attitude of the state delegation toward the readmission of the seceding delegates had not been publicly revealed prior to the meeting of the convention in Baltimore. In that body, the majority of the North Carolina delegation voted with the minority to seat the seceding delegates.[100] When upon the refusal of the convention to seat the old Alabama and Louisiana delegates, the Virginia delegation withdrew from the convention, it was followed by all of the North Carolina delegates except R. P. Dick, J. W. B. Watson, and W. W. Holden.[101] Dick voted for the nomination of Douglas, while Holden and Watson declined to vote.[102]

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certain as there is a God in Heaven the Democratic Party is now at its crisis on the Slavery question. If an ultra-extreme position is taken, the people of this State will not follow them. I cannot see the benefit we are to derive from the 'Slave Code' doctrine—nor can I see why the Cincinnati Platform—pure & simple—with the Dred Scott decision, will not do for us. The whole South has committed itself to popular sovereignty. The record is too plain to [quarrel] about. Are they to gain anything by swallowing their own words & repudiating the principles they have heretofore avowed? . . . The demand of the extremists of the South, if granted would stultify the whole Democratic Party." Miller to L. O'B. Branch, May 11, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[96] H. W. Miller to L. O'B. Branch, May 11, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[97] *North Carolina Standard,* June 13, 1860. The electors who favored Douglas were A. M. Scales, J. R. McLean, Thomas W. Keen, and Ed. G. Haywood.

[98] *Newbern Progress,* May-June, 1860.

[99] *Cong. Globe,* 36 Cong., 1 Sess., III, 1965.

[100] M. Halstead, *op. cit.,* pp. 188-196; D. L. Dumond, *op. cit.,* pp. 83-86.

[101] *North Carolina Standard,* July 4, 1860.

[102] *Ibid.,* July 4, 1860; M. Halstead, *op. cit.,* p. 206.

After their withdrawal from the National Democratic Convention, June 22, the North Carolina delegates joined the representatives of seventeen states in the "Seceders Convention" held in Baltimore, June 23.[103] There, the second majority report of the Charleston Convention was adopted and John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky and General Joseph Lane of Oregon were chosen as the candidates.[104]

The Constitutional Union party had experienced no such difficulties as did the Democrats. Its convention, held in Baltimore, May 9, was a harmonious gathering. It was composed largely of delegates from the border states, with only Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois of the Northwestern states represented. It evaded the difficult slavery issue by adopting a platform which recognized no principles other than "The Constitution of the country, the Union of the States, and the enforcement of the laws." As its standard bearers it chose John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts.[105]

Although Holden had declared that he would make no choice between Breckinridge and Douglas until the consensus of Democratic opinion in the state was determined,[106] the *North Carolina Standard* was soon defending Douglas against attack and obviously leaning toward him.[107] The *Newbern Progress* was outspoken in its advocacy of Douglas.[108] The great majority of the Democratic press[109] and the local meetings held in

[103] These delegates were William Lander, W. W. Avery, L. W. Humphrey, John Walker, Samuel Hargrave, James Fulton, Samuel P. Hill, Thos. J. Green, Columbus Mills, W. S. Ashe, C. H. Foster, Bedford Brown, R. R. Bridgers, W. A. Moore, and Walter L. Steele. *North Carolina Standard,* July 4, 1860. [104] M. Halstead, *op. cit.,* pp. 222-224.

[105] M. Halstead, *op. cit.,* p. 105; see Dumond, *op. cit.,* Chapter VI, for an account of the convention. North Carolina was represented in the convention by thirty-four delegates among whom were John M. Morehead, Richard S. Donnell, Nathaniel Boyden, D. D. Ferebee, E. G. Reade, John H. Haughton, and other prominent Whigs. The North Carolina delegates voted as a unit for William A. Graham.

[106] *North Carolina Standard,* June 27, 1860.

[107] July 4, 11, 18, 1860.

[108] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* July 4, 1860.

[109] The *North Carolina Standard,* July 4, 1860, stated that the following papers had announced their support of Breckinridge and Lane: *Wilmington Journal,* Fayetteville *Carolinian,* Fayetteville *Courier,* Goldsboro *Tribune, Salisbury Banner,* Wilson *Star of Freedom,* Charlotte *Western Democrat,* and Charlotte *Bulletin.*

July,[110] however, were in favor of the Breckinridge ticket. The *North Carolina Standard* thought that the best interests of the Democratic party would be safe with either Breckinridge or Douglas but declared that it preferred the latter because he had the best chance to defeat Lincoln.[111]

Before the middle of July, the Democratic party in the state was badly disorganized, and there were constant disputes and disagreements among the party newspapers. Nevertheless, efforts were being made to consolidate the Douglas and Breckinridge tickets. The first proposal advanced was that the Democratic electors vote for either Breckinridge or Douglas, whichever one had the better chance of defeating Lincoln.[112] The party dissension was diminished by the decision of Holden to accede to the wishes of the majority and support the Breckinridge and Lane ticket.[113] Early in July, eight members of the delegation to the Baltimore Convention requested the State Executive Committee of the party to call a state convention to adjust the division in the party.[114] The Executive Committee, however, decided not to issue the call until public opinion had expressed itself.[115] The *North Carolina Standard* urged that a convention be held, but the majority of the Democratic press considered a convention unnecessary since the Democrats in the state were overwhelmingly for Breckinridge;[116] no convention was called.

Throughout the summer of 1860 the Breckinridge supporters made every effort to win over the Douglas Democrats to the support of their candidate. It was pointed out that Douglas had absolutely no chance of carrying the state and consequently their support of Douglas could serve no purpose other than to lessen the Democratic vote and possibly throw North Carolina

[110] *North Carolina Standard,* July 4, 11, 1860; meetings in Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Cumberland, Wayne, Wilson, and Halifax endorsed Breckinridge.

[111] *North Carolina Standard,* July 4, 18, 1860.

[112] *Ibid.,* July 4, 1860; anonymous writer in *ibid.,* July 11, 1860.

[113] *Ibid.,* July 18, 1860.

[114] *Ibid.,* July 11, 1860.

[115] *Loc. cit.*

[116] July 11, 1860; the Charlotte *Western Democrat,* Charlotte *Bulletin,* Fayetteville *Carolinian,* Wilson *Star of Freedom,* and *Salisbury Banner,* were among the papers which opposed a convention.

to the Constitutional Union party. The Douglas supporters were condemned for sacrificing principles for the man, and Douglas' advocacy of the hated "squatter sovereignty" doctrine was pointed out to them.[117] The leading Douglas men were not dismayed by the attacks of the Breckinridge party and retaliated by denouncing the Breckinridge group as a "disorganizing movement." R. P. Dick, leader of the Douglas forces, in a letter to the Democracy of the fifth congressional district, wrote: "The secession party is not the Democratic party. It is a *new born* party. It sprung [*sic*] from the heated brain of Wm. L. Yancey, and the first words it lisped were *discord, revolution, disunion.* It was cradled in St. Andrew's Hall, at Charleston; it was fed upon nullification and sectionalism."[118] The *Newbern Progress* charged that the Breckinridge ticket "was gotten up for the purpose of destroying and not to save the Union."[119]

Douglas meetings were held in several counties in an attempt to gain supporters.[120] On August 30, a Douglas Convention, composed of about one hundred delegates from thirty-three counties, was held in Raleigh. Douglas was present and addressed the convention. He made an extreme Union speech, which probably lost rather than gained Southern Democratic support.[121] Douglas' strength in North Carolina waned toward the close of the campaign as a result of the attacks of the Breckinridge party and of the extreme nationalistic views which Douglas expressed in his campaign speeches.

The Constitutional Union party, composed largely of former Whigs, made its campaign on the issue of Union or disunion. The Whig press maintained throughout the campaign that Breckinridge was the candidate of the disunionists, in proof of which it pointed to Yancey's support of him.[122] Numerous campaign circulars were distributed to convince the people that a

[117] *Wilmington Journal,* June-July, 1860.
[118] *North Carolina Standard,* August 22, 1860.
[119] October 10, 1860.
[120] In Buncombe, Moore, and Washington at least. *North Carolina Standard,* August 22, 29, 1860.
[121] *Ibid.,* September 5, 1860.
[122] *North Carolina Whig,* June-November, 1860; *Fayetteville Observer,* June-November; *Raleigh Register,* June-November.

vote for Breckinridge would "HELP THE CAUSE OF DISUNION."[123] Leading Whigs were unusually active in the campaign, making speeches throughout the state in support of Bell and Everett. Especially active were Nathaniel Boyden of Rowan, John H. Haughton of Chatham, William A. Graham of Orange, and George E. Badger of Wake. Haughton spoke "against the abominal [*sic*] heresy of secession,"[124] and Boyden warned the people "of the . . . horrible calamities that inevitably would result from any attempt at a dissolution of the Union."[125] Badger charged that it was the design of a large portion of the Breckinridge supporters to destroy the Union.[126]

The Breckinridge Democrats, both in the press and in their campaign speeches, denied that Breckinridge was a disunion candidate.[127] Among the leading Democratic speakers were Ex-Governor Thomas Bragg, Governor Ellis, Senator Clingman, and William T. Dortch of Wayne. Clingman, alone, openly advised resistance in case of the election of Lincoln; the rest expressed strong attachment to the Union.[128] They defended the Breckinridge party as the upholder of the rights of the South and condemned those who would "preserve the Union at the sacrifice of [the] Constitution, and the rights of the States."[129]

In the closing weeks of the campaign when the hope of defeating Lincoln began to grow dim, a feeling of impending disaster began to pervade all classes of the population.[130] In some sections apprehension of a slave uprising appeared and great

[123] See pamphlet *The Breckinridge Party a Disunion Party,* n. p., n. d.

[124] John H. Haughton, Application for Pardon.

[125] Nathaniel Boyden, Application for Pardon.

[126] Account of a speech by Badger, *Raleigh Register,* October 31, 1860; William A. Graham's *Life and Character of Geo. E. Badger* contains an account of Badger's activities in the campaign; outline of a campaign speech in Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[127] *Wilmington Journal,* July-October, 1860.

[128] Thomas L. Clingman, *Writings,* p. 513; W. T. Dortch, Application for Pardon; Thomas Bragg, Application for Pardon.

[129] *North Carolina Standard,* September 19, 1860.

[130] Mrs. Rufus Lenoir to her husband, October 29, 1860, Lenoir Papers; Charles L. Pettigrew to J. Johnston Pettigrew, October 20, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill; *North Carolina Standard,* November 7, 1860.

excitement prevailed for several days.[131] After the results of the October elections in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana became known, the election of Lincoln appeared almost certain.[132] Consequently, considerable attention was given to the policy for North Carolina to adopt after his election. Since 1856 there had been frequent threats by Democrats that the election of a Republican would lead to a dissolution of the Union. Upon the nomination of Lincoln in May, the *Wilmington Journal* declared him to be a more dangerous man than Seward since the latter "represents a *sentiment* in opposition to us" whereas "Lincoln embodies a *system* with an avowed object, that object being the 'ultimate extermination' of slavery."[133] When asked in October whether it would favor secession in the event of Lincoln's election, the *Wilmington Journal* replied: "It is not simply a slab-sided, rail-splitting Illinois politician that we look at—it is the system he represents— . . . We speak only for ourselves when we say that we think the perils surrounding submission are greater than those attendant upon an opposite course."[134] The Goldsboro *Tribune* stated that although the election of Lincoln might not be an adequate cause for secession, in view of the wrongs which the South had suffered and continued to suffer, it might afford the occasion for secession.[135] Clingman stated in August "that if Lincoln was elected he thought the Union ought to be dissolved,"[136] and William S. Ashe, Democrat of New Hanover, predicted that the immediate result of Lincoln's election would be the secession of at least five of the Gulf states. The remaining slave states would then be a hopeless minority in the federal Congress and the anti-slavery majority would be able to repeal all the laws favorable to the South. He made it clear that the South should not submit to Republican rule.[137] Warren Winslow, Democrat of Cumberland, speaking at Wilmington in October, said that the election of Lincoln could pro-

[131] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, October 25, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[132] *North Carolina Standard,* October 24, 1860.

[133] May 24, 1860. [134] October 25, 1860.

[135] Quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* October 10, 1860.

[136] B. F. Moore to W. A. Graham, August 12, 1860, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[137] See his letters in *North Carolina Standard,* September 13, 16, 1860.

duce no great harm at present since there was an anti-Republican majority in the other branches of the government. "But the time might come," he warned, "and that full soon, when the case would be different—when North Carolina might deem it necessary to the preservation of her rights and the maintenance of her honor to assume a separate and independent position."[138]

The Douglas supporters, the Whigs, and a large proportion of the Breckinridge Democrats were of the opinion that the election of Lincoln would not be a just cause for a dissolution of the Union. The *Newbern Progress,* Douglas journal, announced that it favored the maintenance of the Union as long as the rights of North Carolina were respected.[139] The Greensboro *Times* (independent) stated that however much it might object to the principles of a party whose candidate might be elected president as long as he faithfully observed and enforced the Constitution there was no need for a disruption of the Union.[140] The *North Carolina Standard,* for over a decade leader of the Democratic press, repeatedly stated during September and October that the mere election of a Republican president would not at that time "be sufficient cause for dissolving the Union."[141] However, should some of the Southern states secede, the *Standard* declared that it would oppose any attempt to coerce them back into the Union even to the point of forceful resistance.[142] R. S. Patterson, a prominent Democrat of Forsyth, wrote that he was unwilling to see the country ruined because of the election of a Black Republican and favored submitting to his election until a deliberate violation of the rights of the South occurred. Such, he declared to be the sentiment of the people of Forsyth.[143]

Most emphatic of all in their opposition to secession in the event of Lincoln's election were the Whigs. B. F. Moore of Wake wrote that "these traitors [those advocating disunion]

[138] *Wilmington Journal,* October 25, 1860.
[139] Quoted in *Hillsborough Recorder,* November 7, 1860.
[140] October 6, 1860.
[141] September 19, 26, October 31, 1860.
[142] September 12, October 17, 1860.
[143] R. S. Patterson to Col. T. W. Alspaugh, October 3, 1860, Patterson Collection, Raleigh.

. . . [could never by his consent] carry N C with them."[144] The *Greensborough Patriot* commented that "it would be a nice piece of folly to dissolve the great and glorious Union simply because those who profess to be its friends, have, by their insane quarrels, permitted a minority to gain a temporary ascendancy."[145] In an effort to solidify Union sentiment and to forestall any precipitate action in the event of Lincoln's election, the Constitutional Union party held several large Union meetings in various parts of the state.[146] The largest of these was at Salisbury. It lasted two days and, according to some reports, was attended by a crowd of over 6,000. Addresses were made by fifteen prominent Whigs, among them George E. Badger, Nathaniel Boyden, Alfred Dockery, William A. Graham, O. P. Meares, John M. Morehead, W. N. H. Smith, and Zebulon B. Vance. Enthusiasm reached such a high pitch that the crowd listened for two hours in a drizzling rain to Vance's speech in praise of the Union. "But one sentiment prevailed," wrote a contemporary, "and that was, we will fight for the Constitution, the Union, and the laws, within the Union and the laws."[147]

Governor Ellis correctly described the attitude of North Carolina toward the election in a long letter to Governor Gist of South Carolina. The people of the state, he wrote, were far from agreeing as to what should be done in the event of Lincoln's election. Some favored submission, others resistance, while the majority would await the course of events. Some took the view that Lincoln would be powerless with an opposing majority in Congress, while others thought that his administration of the government would be a fatal blow to the institution of Negro slavery. "Upon the whole," he wrote, "I am decidedly of [the] opinion that a majority of our people would not consider . . . [his election] as sufficient ground for dissolving the Union of the States."[148] The facts seem to indicate that there

[144] Moore to W. A. Graham, August 12, 1860, Wm. A. Graham Papers.
[145] October 4, 1860.
[146] *Fayetteville Observer,* October 22, 29, 1860.
[147] A full account of the meeting appeared in the *Fayetteville Observer*, October 22, 1860. The *Wilmington Journal,* October 25, stated that the reports of the meeting were grossly exaggerated and that less than 500 arrived by train for the meeting.
[148] October 19, 1860, Ellis Papers.

was little disunion sentiment on the eve of Lincoln's election. During the campaign, every party professed to be in favor of the Union. Only among a few extremists and in a few of the slaveholding counties was there any disposition to regard the election of a Republican president as sufficient cause for secession. North Carolina was overwhelmingly in favor of maintaining the Union.

Breckinridge carried the state by the small majority of 848, receiving 48,539 to 44,990 for Bell and 2,701 for Douglas.[149] Breckinridge received over sixty per cent of the votes cast in the middle eastern counties where slavery was prevalent[150] and in the tiers of counties along the Virginia[151] and the South Carolina lines where the culture of tobacco and cotton was prevalent and slaveholding not unusual.[152] Bell and Douglas received over sixty per cent of the total vote of the extreme eastern counties (old Whig strongholds),[153] and of the western counties.[154] Douglas failed to carry a single county.[155]

[149] *Wilmington Journal*, November 22, 1860. See Map II for a plotting of the vote.

[150] These counties included Warren, Franklin, Nash, Edgecombe, Martin, Wilson, Wayne, Sampson, Duplin, Lenoir, Onslow, New Hanover, and Columbus. Slaves composed more than twenty-five per cent of the population of each of these counties. See Map I.

[151] Surry, Stokes, Rockingham, and Caswell. Of these counties only in Surry (twelve per cent) was the slave population less than twenty-four per cent of the total. See Map I.

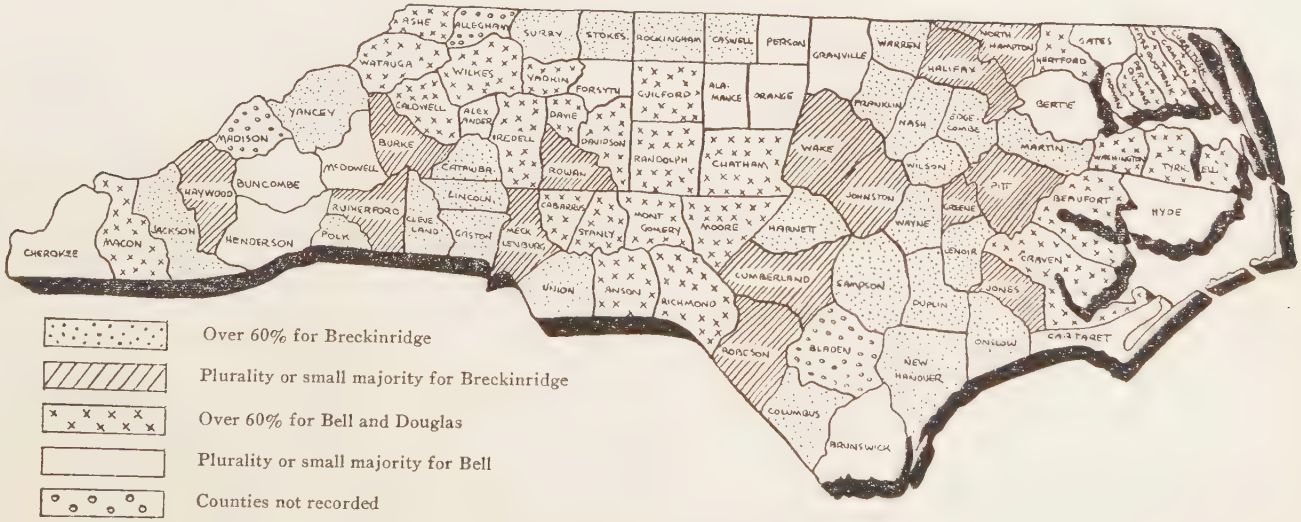
[152] Polk, Cleveland, Catawba, Lincoln, Gaston, and Union. These were not large slaveholding counties but were in the cotton region and had long been Democratic strongholds.

[153] Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Hertford, Washington, Tyrrell, Beaufort, and Craven. All of these except Craven customarily cast Whig majorities in presidential elections.

[154] Chatham, Moore, Richmond, Anson, Montgomery, Stanly, Cabarrus, Randolph, Guilford, Davidson, Davie, Iredell, Yadkin, Wilkes, Caldwell, Ashe, Watauga, and Macon. All of these customarily cast Whig majorities in presidential contests.

[155] He received over one hundred votes in each of the following counties: Craven, Chatham, Guilford, Moore, Mecklenburg, Robeson, Rockingham, and Wake.

MAP II. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860



CHAPTER IX

SECESSION CONSIDERED

The election of Lincoln created dismay among North Carolinians. The *Wilmington Journal* doubted "if too gloomy or too serious a view" could be taken of the event.[1] Expressions of alarm and of despair for the future were frequent.[2] One North Carolinian wrote his wife: "I would not tell you my feelings if I could find words to express them. . . . May God avert the dangers which threaten our country—guide & protect us."[3] A review of the various opinions expressed immediately following the election will give some indication of the prevailing sentiment in the state.

However much many North Carolinians deprecated the result of the election, they did not propose to take any part in initiating a destruction of the federal government. The Whig press immediately let it be known that it did not consider the election of a sectional candidate, "however obnoxious" he might be, a sufficient reason for dissolving the Union; since the South had participated in the election, it was obligated to acquiesce in the result. Moreover, the South had no reason to assume that Lincoln would "not faithfully perform his duty to all parts of the Confederacy."[4] The *Fayetteville Observer* thought that the president would be powerless to injure the South as long as both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court were against him.[5] The *Greensborough Patriot* went so far as to state that

[1] November 8, 1860. See *infra,* Chap. X, pp. 225-226, for an analysis of the election of 1860 in terms of secession sentiment.

[2] Anne Pettigrew to Wm. S. Pettigrew, November 23, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[3] Rufus T. Lenoir to Sallie Lenoir, November 13, 1860, Gen. Wm. T. Lenoir Papers.

[4] *Fayetteville Observer,* November 12, 1860.

[5] November 26, 1860; the *Hillsborough Recorder,* November 14, 1860, took a similar position.

it could see only two reasons why the election was used by some as an excuse for disunion and they were that "certain disappointed" politicians were "determined to be promoted" and that the cotton states wanted "to open the African Slave Trade."[6] Furthermore, the Whig press held that the result of secession would be a bloody and destructive war.[7] The Greensboro *Times* (independent) declared that "if secession is the remedy for violated faith" the South was "a long time finding it out." It admitted that the nullification of the fugitive slave law was a wrong and an injustice, and insisted that if that was the reason for secession "call it by the right name" and stop saying "we secede because Mr. Lincoln be elected."[8]

The party leaders were equally opposed to considering the election of a Republican a cause for disunion. William A. Graham denied that there was any right of secession and saw no necessity for a revolution. "Who can prepare for a declaration of independence," he asked, "appealing to a candid world for its approbation and sympathy, upon the ground that we have been outvoted in an election in which we took the chances of success, and a candidate has been elected who, however obnoxious, we have not deemed unworthy to compete with us for our votes?"[9] George E. Badger took a similar position.[10]

The same unanimity of sentiment was not so apparent among the Democrats. W. W. Holden, no longer on intimate terms with the Ellis faction of the party, took a view of the situation similar to that held by the Whig press. The Constitution, he held, had set up a government of checks and balances and the possession by a hostile party of one department of the government should not cause a dissolution.[11] Slavery in the states was not yet in danger, insisted Holden, and consequently he thought it "better to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of." He advised the people to "Watch and Wait." Of one thing he felt sure—North Carolina would "not

[6] November 29, 1860.

[7] *Greensborough Patriot,* November 8, 15, 1860; *Hillsborough Recorder,* November 14, 1860. [8] November 17, 1860.

[9] Letter published in *North Carolina Standard,* November 14, 1860.

[10] Badger to a friend, November 13, 1860, Geo. E. Badger Papers.

[11] *North Carolina Standard,* November 7, 1860.

submit to the slightest indignity or the slightest encroachment at the hands of the black Republican party."[12] The *Warrenton News* likewise opposed hasty action and urged the South to unite on the basis of its constitutional rights.[13]

Perhaps the most radical of the influential Democratic journals was the *Wilmington Journal* located in the large slaveholding county of New Hanover. The election of Lincoln was, in its opinion, the step which would inevitably end either in the disruption of the government or in the destruction of the rights of the Southern states. Moreover, it declared, his election

> . . . means a sweeping away of all the guaranties of State equality in the Union— . . . It means that slave property is to be excluded from the Territories, and new slave States from the Union.—it means that the whole influence of the Federal Government is to be cast into the scale of opposition to the institutions of our section of the Union, . . .
>
> It means, further, that while all this is to be done, we are compelled to pay a tribute in the shape of a high protective Tariff, which tribute is to swell the wealth and insolence of our oppressors.[14]

While not so radical as the *Wilmington Journal*, the *Newbern Progress*, a Douglas journal, opposed supine submission to Republican rule. It proposed that a conference of the Southern states be held and that the North be asked for assurances that it would respect the rights of the South. Should the North refuse, it proposed that the fifteen slaveholding states withdraw from the Union.[15]

Among Democratic leaders there was also a division of opinion. The great majority had placed themselves on record in the presidential campaign as being opposed to a dissolution of the Union. Immediately after the election, most of them were still of this opinion. Senator Bragg and L. O'B. Branch were known to be opposed to withdrawal from the Union at that time.[16] There were some, on the other hand, who showed themselves to be in sympathy with the secession movement in the cotton

[12] *North Carolina Standard*, November 14, 1860.
[13] Quoted in *ibid.*, November 14, 1860.
[14] November 15, 1860. [15] November 26, 1860.
[16] D. L. Swain to J. J. Pettigrew, November 21, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

states. Governor Ellis and Senator Clingman were leaning strongly toward secession,[17] and Weldon N. Edwards, one of the older Democratic leaders, was now convinced that the Southern states should secede unless adequate guarantees of their rights were granted.[18]

The overwhelming majority of the people obviously did not regard Lincoln's election as a sufficient cause for secession. It was the general sentiment of the majority that the South should not act hastily but should wait a reasonable length of time and give Lincoln a trial. The people were decidedly of the opinion that a united South could still have security within the Union.[19] One contemporary predicted "The people of this state will move slowly, and will only be forced into action by being drawn into it by one side or the other."[20]

There were some, however, who saw in the election of a sectional president a threat to the institutions of the South which could be avoided only by a recourse to separation from the Union. This group was strongest in the slaveholding counties, and, although deriving support from both Whigs and Democrats, was made up largely of those who had supported Breckinridge in the election.[21] This element was at that time a very small minority of the population. The people generally were disposed to accept the results of the election and to await the course of events before taking any action.

[17] *Loc. cit.;* Ellis to Gov. Gist, October 19, 1860, Ellis Papers.

[18] Weldon N. Edwards, Application for Pardon.

[19] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Charles Pettigrew, November 3, 1860, Wm. S. Pettigrew to his wife, November 11, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill; Sallie Lenoir to Rufus T. Lenoir, November 12, 1860, Gen. Wm. T. Lenoir Papers; Wm. A. Walsh to L. O'B. Branch, November 5, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[20] Charles L. Pettigrew to his wife, November 14, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[21] Charles L. Pettigrew to his wife, November 15, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill; Henry R. Bryan to J. J. Pettigrew, November 14, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh; Applications for Pardon of Wm. Grimes, Wm. F. Phifer, and L. F. Siler. Cf. A. C. Cole, "Lincoln's Election an Immediate Menace to Slavery in the States?" *Am. Hist. Rev.* XXXVI, 740-767; J. G. deR. Hamilton, "Lincoln's Election an Immediate Menace to Slavery in the States?" *Am. Hist. Rev.* XXXVII, 700-711. Cole contends that Lincoln's election was not a menace to slavery in the states, while Hamilton takes the opposite position.

It was expected that the governor's message and the action of the legislature, which was to meet on November 19, would outline the policy which North Carolina would follow in the crisis which the country now faced. As soon as the legislature assembled, it was apparent that the session was to be an exciting one. In the early days of the session the immediate secessionists, although in the minority, were active and well organized They insisted upon some sort of action and conducted an influential lobby against a policy of inaction.[22] The leading disunionists, for the most part influential Democrats close to the administration, applied the party whip mercilessly in an effort to force the rank and file of the Democratic members to support a policy of immediate action.[23]

Governor Ellis' message was closely in accord with the policy of the Southern radicals. He traced the course of the anti-slavery movement, concluding that the rights of the South were seriously threatened by the incoming Republican administration. In view of the serious state of affairs, he recommended that a conference of the Southern states be held; that a convention of the people of the state be called; and that the state be put in a position of military defense through a reorganization of the militia and the formation of a corps of ten thousand volunteers.[24]

The message received the enthusiastic approval of the majority of the Democratic press.[25] It was especially pleasing to

[22] J. S. Harrington to J. Mc. Harrington, November 23, 1860, John McLean Harrington Papers. He wrote that "a potion [*sic*] of the Democrats is for cession [*sic*] wright [*sic*] or wrong [,] rule or ruin."

[23] Jonathan Worth to J. J. Jackson, December 17, 1860, J. D. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Worth Correspondence,* I, 127. According to Worth, the state printing contract was taken from Holden by the secession Democrats because of his Union views. *Ibid.,* I, 125-126. H. M. Shaw, Southern ultra, wrote Gov. Ellis, November 26: "We are all delighted at the rap which the Legislature has given Holden." Ellis Papers.

[24] *Senate Journal 1860-61,* pp. 11-43. The message was prepared in consultation with Thomas Bragg and Thomas L. Clingman, United States Senators, and W. W. Avery, R. R. Bridgers, John F. Hoke, and R. O. Burton, members of the legislature. Ellis Diary, November 17, 1860, Ellis Papers.

[25] According to the *State Journal,* December 12, 1860, secession organ, the following newspapers approved the message: Charlotte *Western Democrat, Wilmington Journal,* Tarboro *Southern,* Fayetteville *Carolinian,*

the Southern extremists, who thanked Ellis for his "patriotic & bold stand" and expressed the hope that the message would "cause thousands to hold up their heads and strike for the true cause & their country."[26] The *North Carolina Standard,* now a bitter opponent of the administration and leader of the Union press in the state, denounced the message "as tending to disunion without good cause," and charged that Ellis was trying "to 'precipitate' the state into the same position occupied by South Carolina."[27] The message was also condemned by the conservatives in the legislature.[28]

In the legislature, there soon appeared two clearly defined factions, the secessionists or radicals, who favored immediate action by North Carolina, and the Unionists or conservatives, who saw no necessity for a withdrawal from the Union. The latter group was composed of both those who denied the right of secession and those who admitted the abstract right but opposed exercising it at the time. This latter group, for the most part composed of states' rights Democrats, led by Bedford Brown of Caswell, acted with the extreme Unionists in the early weeks of the legislature in order to prevent that body from taking any precipitate action. Thus, the extreme Unionists and the conservative states' rights group coalesced to oppose the immediate secessionists. The Unionists were led in the House by D. D. Ferebee of Camden, P. T. Henry of Bertie, A. K. Simerton of Iredell, and J. D. Wilkerson of Person, and in the Senate by Bedford Brown of Caswell, Josiah Turner of Orange, J. D. Ramsey of Rowan, John M. Morehead of Guilford, and David Outlaw of Bertie. The leading secessionists were John F. Hoke of Lincoln, Samuel J. Person of New Hanover, and Robert R. Bridgers of Edgecombe in the House, and W. W.

Goldsboro *Tribune, Warrenton News, Asheville News, Western Sentinel,* Washington *Dispatch,* Tarboro *Mercury,* and Newbern *Enquirer.*

[26] H. M. Shaw to Gov. Ellis, November 26, 1860, A. W. Venable to Gov. Ellis, November 25, 1860, Ellis Papers.

[27] November 28, 1860. The South Carolina legislature on November 13 called a convention to assemble, December 20.

[28] J. S. Harrington to J. M. Harrington, November 23, 1860, John McLean Harrington Papers.

Avery of Burke, Marcus Erwin of Buncombe, Eli W. Hall of New Hanover, and V. C. Barringer of Cabarrus in the Senate.

The governor's recommendations were referred to the joint committee on federal relations which was created after the organization of the two houses.[29] The conservatives immediately showed their opposition to any steps leading toward secession. On November 22, Dennis D. Ferebee of Camden introduced in the House a series of resolutions which clearly expressed the attitude of the Union Whigs. The resolutions declared: 1. That the Constitution of the United States is not a compact of sovereign states; 2. that no state can withdraw from the Union without revolution; 3. that it is the duty of North Carolina to defend its rights in the Union; and, 4. that the election of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin is not a sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union.[30]

The Ferebee resolutions were severely condemned by the radical press as possessed of a "spirit of tame submission to tyranny."[31] John F. Hoke of Lincoln criticized them and offered in their place a set of resolutions, expressing the views of the secessionists. Unless the rights of the states were boldly upheld, he said, slavery in the South would be abolished. His resolutions, which expressed the same views as the Shepard resolutions of 1850-1851, stated: 1. That the Constitution of the United States is a compact between sovereign and independent states; and, 2. that North Carolina has the right to withdraw from the Union whenever a majority of its citizens deem such action necessary for the protection of its rights.[32]

The introduction of Hoke's secession resolutions was followed by the introduction of numerous resolutions by Unionists

[29] The committee was composed of W. W. Avery, Bedford Brown, David Outlaw, V. C. Barringer, and J. Stowe from the Senate and Samuel Person, John F. Hoke, Nathan Newby, William F. Green, and Giles Mebane from the House.

[30] *House Journal 1860-61,* p. 47; *North Carolina Standard,* November 27, 1860.

[31] *State Journal,* December 26, 1860.

[32] *House Journal 1860-61,* p. 48; *North Carolina Standard,* November 27, 1860.

asserting that the election of Lincoln did not constitute sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union. All of the resolutions, including those of Ferebee and Hoke, were referred to the committee on federal relations.[33]

In the Senate, Bedford Brown of Caswell soon appeared as the most active and effective opponent of immediate secession. Speaking in the Senate, November 23, he said that he did not see in any existing cause or causes justification for resorting to secession. Lincoln, he pointed out, would have the Senate, House, and Supreme Court against him and would be powerless to injure the institutions of the South. North Carolina should wait until its rights were violated by Lincoln, then would be the time to act. He upheld the abstract right of secession but thought that the right should not be exercised until all other remedies had been exhausted.[34]

On December 6, Brown engaged in a debate with W. W. Avery of Burke. Brown contended "that nine of every ten of the people of the State were opposed to a dissolution of the Union for existing causes." He argued that the Breckinridge electors had not advocated disunion prior to the election and that it would be a breach of faith with the people to take steps toward disunion. He denied that he was a submissionist, but expressed his opposition to "hasty and ill-considered action."

Avery, in his reply to Brown, admitted that the mere election of a president was not a cause for disunion "but the election of a sectional president on the platform of principles as laid down by the Republican party . . . coupled with the continued aggressions of that party on the rights of the South" was a cause for secession. He said that if the Breckinridge electors had declared for disunion, Breckinridge would have received a

[33] Proceedings of the legislature in *North Carolina Standard,* November 27, 1860. The legislative journals contain only very brief accounts of the proceedings of the legislature. Much fuller accounts, including the more important speeches, are found in the newspapers. Consequently, the writer has relied upon the accounts of the proceedings found in the newspapers, with the exception of the resolutions and the votes, for which the journals have been used.

[34] *North Carolina Standard,* November 29, 1860.

20,000 majority, for the people were far in advance of the politicians on the question of disunion.[35]

Brown, attempting to formulate some definite policy for the conservatives, on December 10 introduced resolutions to send a committee of Thomas Ruffin, Weldon N. Edwards, William A. Graham, and W. N. H. Smith to the legislature of South Carolina to urge that secession be postponed until a consultation of all the slaveholding states could be held.[36] The resolutions were debated for several days and were opposed by the secessionists and some of the Unionists. So much time was consumed in the debates that Brown, feeling that it was too late to restrain South Carolina, withdrew his resolutions on December 14.[37]

Meanwhile, on December 12, the committee on federal relations submitted its report to the two houses. The majority report was closely in accord with the recommendations of the governor and reflected the views of the radicals. It emphasized the gravity of the crisis in national affairs and the threat to the rights of the state, recommended the call of a convention, and submitted a bill for that purpose. It also recommended a reorganization of the state militia and the formation of a corps of volunteers.[38] The convention bill provided for an election of delegates on February 7, 1861, to a convention which was to meet on February 18. The bill also specifically stated that no ordinance providing for the separation of North Carolina from the United States or her union with any other government should be valid until ratified by a majority of the voters.[39] The conservative *Raleigh Register* declared that should the legislature manufacture a convention, it would "not be the first occasion on which public opinion has been manufactured by selfish and aspiring men."[40]

The minority report signed by three members[41] opposed the

[35] Both speeches are in the *North Carolina Standard,* December 8, 1860.

[36] *Senate Journal 1860-61,* pp. 98-100.

[37] For an account of the debates see *North Carolina Standard,* December 11, 15, 1860; John D. Taylor to T. D. McDowell, December 12, 1860, C. B. Heller Collection.

[38] *House Journal 1860-61,* pp. 163-164. [39] *Ibid.,* pp. 166-169.

[40] December 15, 1860. [41] Mebane, Newby, and Outlaw.

call of a convention, declaring that the bill called a convention earlier than the exigencies of the situation demanded. They thought it more prudent to await efforts to compromise the difficulties and maintained that the existing grievances did not justify a state convention. Instead of a state convention, they favored the call of a convention of all the states of the Union to make a "final settlement of all subjects in controversy between the Northern and Southern states." If the convention could not make such a settlement, provision could be made for a peaceable separation of the states and an equitable distribution of the property of the government among them.[42]

The radicals had directed their efforts primarily toward the passage of a convention bill, whereas the conservatives, without any definite program and hoping for a favorable turn of affairs, had determined upon an obstructionist policy.[43] The latter were successful in having consideration of the convention bill deferred until January 3, 1861. Nevertheless, the proposed convention and the course to be followed by the state remained the chief subjects of discussion in the legislature. In the few days prior to the Christmas recess on December 22, debate became intense and excitement increased. On December 16, Eli W. Hall of New Hanover delivered a fiery secession speech in the Senate. He spoke at length of the growing Northern opposition to Southern institutions and said that the triumph of the Republican party meant the inevitable destruction of Southern society. He painted a dismal picture of the social revolution in the South which would ultimately result from Republican rule. To quote: "With riots between the different classes of our white population, our whole social system convulsed in the agonies of dissolution, . . . the whole world against us in sentiment, and our own government our most bitter and unrelenting foe—great God, what hope would there be? As we stood at bay, frenzied, maddened, but despairing, with our wives and children clinging to us pale and panic stricken—death itself would be a refuge." He declared that he was no disunionist *per*

[42] *House Journal 1860-61,* pp. 164-166.

[43] John D. Taylor to T. D. McDowell, December 12, 1860, C. B. Heller Collection; Jonathan Worth to J. J. Jackson, November 29, 1860, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Worth Correspondence,* I, 124.

sc, but thought that North Carolina should call a convention, take a firm stand, and if not assured of its rights, leave the Union.[44] Josiah Turner, Bedford Brown, and others replied to Hall and opposed disunion.[45]

On December 20, the legislature received I. W. Garrott and R. H. Smith, commissioners from Alabama, who addressed a large gathering in the Commons Hall that evening. They traced the history of the anti-slavery movement and insisted that the triumph of Black Republican rule would mean the ruin of the institutions of the South. In conclusion, they urged North Carolina to cooperate with Alabama "in counsel and in action."[46] Jacob Thompson, Secretary of the Interior of the United States, also visited Raleigh as a commissioner from Mississippi and urged North Carolina to cooperate with Mississippi in the adoption of measures for the "common defence and safety of the South."[47]

Upon one subject, that of military preparedness, the radicals and the great majority of the conservatives were in accord. A bill introduced in the Senate by Marcus Erwin to appropriate $300,000 for the purchase of arms and munitions of war and to set up a military commission of D. H. Hill and C. C. Tew to advise the governor in its expenditure passed the Senate December 18 with but three dissenting votes.[48] In the House, the attempts of several Unionists to amend it and to reduce the amount of the appropriation failed. It was not until January 8, 1861, however, that it finally passed the House.[49]

On December 22, the legislature recessed for the Christmas holidays to reassemble early in January. So completely had its time been taken in political discussion and debate that not a single resolution or act was passed in the month prior to the Christmas recess.

[44] *Wilmington Journal,* January 10, 1861.
[45] *North Carolina Standard,* December 20, 25, 1860.
[46] *State Journal,* December 26, 1860.
[47] *State Journal,* December 26, 1860; Josiah Turner called Thompson's visit "the most astounding instance of intrepid political affrontry [*sic*] on record." Application for Pardon.
[48] *Senate Journal 1860-61,* p. 126. Those who opposed its passage were Dr. J. G. Ramsay, L. Q. Sharpe, and Jonathan Worth.
[49] *House Journal 1860-61,* p. 262. The vote was 73-26.

While the legislature was thus embroiled in heated discussions, public opinion throughout the state was being aroused to a pitch never before equaled. It has already been noted that there was little disunion sentiment in the state at the time of Lincoln's election. By the time of the secession of South Carolina, December 20, however, a small but very active radical party had arisen and the movement for secession was rapidly gaining momentum.

Early in November the great majority of the press of the state opposed disunion and only a very few newspapers were advocating a policy which contemplated secession. The *State Journal,* set up in Raleigh, November 28, and edited by John Spelman, state printer, was from its establishment the leader of the radical press. The *Wilmington Journal,* Goldsboro *Rough Notes, Salisbury Banner,* and Charlotte *Bulletin* ably assisted the *State Journal* in its campaign of propaganda. Realizing that the great majority of the people was opposed to immediate action, the radical press did not for the most part urge immediate withdrawal but concentrated its efforts upon destroying Union sentiment and inculcating disunion views. This was to be accomplished by a well-planned program of propaganda. In the first place, it was maintained that Republican rule would result in the destruction of the South's "social and political civilization" including its "most cherished institutions"; secondly, it was pointed out that the chances of preserving the Union were very small; and finally, the very effective argument was used that upon the secession of the cotton states North Carolina would be forced to choose between North and South.

The many evidences of the strength of anti-slavery sentiment in the North were pointed out to the people with telling effectiveness. They were reminded of the John Brown raid and the enthusiastic popular approval it received in the North, of the bitter anti-slavery speeches in the Senate and House, of the attacks of the Republican press on slavery and the professed opposition of the party to the institution, of the flagrant violations of the fugitive slave law, of the personal liberty laws of the free states, and of the fierce denunciation of slavery by fanatics, re-

ligious leaders, and press.[50] The time was rapidly approaching, declared one writer, "when a perfect union of all the Southern States may be their only safe guard against invasion and subjugation."[51]

The *State Journal* called attention to the refusal of the Black Republicans to compromise. On December 19, it reported that "the political uncertainties of the future increase rather than diminish" and that "there has been no sign of concession" from "the infatuated politicians who have for years preached a crusade against the South." In the same issue, it announced that the leading men in Congress had given up all hope of the preservation of the Union and that the attitude of the Black Republicans was one "of open defiance and aggression." Some credence was given to these reports by the address issued from Washington, December 14, by twenty-eight Southern members of Congress, including Burton Craige and Thomas Ruffin of North Carolina. The address stated that all hope of relief in the Union was gone and that "the honor, safety, and independence of the Southern people require the organization of a Southern Confederacy." Private reports from Washington also seemed to emphasize the hopelessness of the situation.[52]

On the eve of the presidential election the *Wilmington Journal* had pointed out that the secession of the Gulf states would force North Carolina to adopt some policy with reference to them. In the weeks following the election, it took the position that should a dissolution take place North Carolina should go with the South and should act "early enough to take a part in forming the rules of the new confederacy."[53] The *State Journal* insisted that North Carolina could not take a neutral position in

[50] *North Carolina Whig,* November 4, December 4, 11, 1860; *State Journal,* November-December, 1860; *Wilmington Journal,* November-December, 1860; H. K. Burgwyn in *State Journal,* December 5, 1860.

[51] *State Journal,* December 19, 1860.

[52] *North Carolina Standard,* December 19, 1860; H. A. Gilliam to W. S. Pettigrew, December 20, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill. He wrote that he had received a letter from W. N. H. Smith saying there was no hope for the Union. L. O'B. Branch wrote his wife, December 6, to the same effect. Mrs. L. O'B. Branch Papers, Raleigh.

[53] November 22, December 6, 20, 1860.

the event of the withdrawal of any of the Southern states.[54] The question would soon be put to the people, it stated, not whether or not they should secede *"but whether they will adhere to the Northern or Southern Confederacy."*[55]

Meanwhile, the secession leaders were engaged in convincing the people of the advisability of a separation from the Union. Governor Ellis directed the secession campaign and was in close touch with local leaders.[56] He was also in communication with the radicals in South Carolina and aided in the distribution of secession literature in the state.[57] The leading radicals, drawn largely from the Democratic party,[58] were active in getting their views before the people.[59] A. W. Venable stated in a published letter that further guarantees from the North would be worthless since it would not abide by the guarantees already present in the Constitution.[60] Meanwhile, Clingman was making similar declarations in the West.[61] On November 30, William W. Boyce and John D. Ashmore, members of Congress from South Carolina, made speeches in Raleigh in which they emphasized the threatening aspect of the crisis and advocated the immediate secession of South Carolina.[62]

In the large slaveholding counties of the East and in some of the southwestern counties, the secession movement was gain-

[54] December 12, 1860.

[55] *State Journal,* December 19, 1860.

[56] See Ellis Papers, November-December, 1860.

[57] Robert N. Gourdin to Gov. Ellis, December 12, 1860, Ellis Papers. In this letter, Gourdin offered to send 10,000 or more copies of pamphlets entitled *State Sovereignty and the doctrine of Coercion* and *The Right to Secede* for distribution in North Carolina. The present writer has been unable to find out whether or not they were sent. However, Gourdin had already sent some literature to Ellis prior to this. Ellis sent Gourdin a list of names of leading men in the state to whom secession literature could be sent for distribution. Ellis Papers, December.

[58] Ellis Papers, November-December, 1860; Josiah Turner, Application for Pardon.

[59] Mrs. D. H. Hamilton, Jr., to her husband, December 16, 1860, Ruffin-Roulhac-Hamilton Papers; Mrs. Charles Pettigrew to her husband, November 17, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill; the Greensboro *Times,* December 8, 1860, wrote, "Young men and boys are the loudest and most determined and uncompromising for secession."

[60] *North Carolina Standard,* December 19, 1860.

[61] R. F. Eller to Z. B. Vance, December 17, 1860, Z. B. Vance Papers.

[62] *State Journal,* December 5, 1860.

ing strength.[63] The majority of the radicals, however, had not yet come to realize that the people throughout the state could not be drawn into a disunion movement on the lone issue that Republican success threatened the existence of slavery. One contemporary, convinced of this fact, wrote: "You cannot unite the *masses* of any Southern State much less those of N. C. against the Union & in favor [of] slavery *alone:* but change the issue & the doctrine of *force* will & with the two the conservative submissionist will be forced into *toryism* or a Southern Confed^cy. No other choice will be left."[64]

The most tangible indication of the activity of the radicals and of the growing secession sentiment was the meetings held in numerous counties in November and December. The first secession meeting was held in Cleveland County, November 12, at which a resolution was adopted asserting that the election of Lincoln "should be the cause of immediate secession by all the slave states."[65] On November 19, a large secession meeting was held in Wilmington. The resolutions were indicative of the sentiment of those adopted at other meetings. They declared: 1. that the election of a sectional president made it the duty of North Carolina to assume its position as an independent sovereignty; 2. that a convention of the people should be called immediately for the purpose of withdrawing the state from the Union; 3. that the legislature should provide for the immediate organization and arming of the militia; and, 4. that copies of the resolutions be placed before the legislature.[66] Soon similar meetings were being held in most of the eastern slaveholding counties and in the cotton counties of the southwest, especially Mecklenburg, a strong secession center.[67] The resolu-

[63] Goldsboro *Rough Notes* quoted in *North Carolina Standard,* December 12, 1860; M. B. Smith to T. D. McDowell, November 28, 1860, McDowell Papers; C. B. Harrison to L. O'B. Branch, December 11, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[64] C. B. Harrison to L. O'B. Branch, December 2, 1860, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham. This letter contains one of the fullest accounts of the activities of the secessionists and of their problems that the present writer has found.

[65] Ellis Papers; *North Carolina Standard,* November 28, 1860.

[66] *Wilmington Journal,* December 20, 1860.

[67] Prior to the secession of South Carolina, secession meetings were held in Pitt, Craven, Cumberland, Halifax, Martin, Edgecombe, Wilson,

tions of the secession meetings varied from an advocacy of immediate action to an advocacy of withdrawal in the event that adequate guarantees for the protection of Southern Rights were not given. Secession meetings were noticeably absent thus far from most of the western counties and the eastern coastal counties.

The success of the radical program was, of course, contingent upon the call of a convention. Consequently, the secession speakers, meetings, and press all urged the call of a convention of the people to determine upon a policy for the state. In an editorial on "The Convention Question," the *State Journal* argued that a convention, in which opinions could be freely exchanged, was the best means of producing that unanimity of action and sentiment among the people so necessary to the preservation of their rights and liberties.[68] Although the convention move was at that time primarily the move of the secessionists, a small number of the Unionists and a considerable number of the states' rights group also favored it.[69]

While the radicals were attempting to convince the people that the civilization of the South could best be protected by separation from the North, there was a conviction among the conservatives, at that time a vast majority of the people, that the rights of the South could be adequately maintained in the Union. Moreover, this belief was strengthened by the repeated assurances from friends in the North that if the people of the South would wait a few weeks they would be given "all the security they want for fair treatment hereafter."[70] There was

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Brunswick, Bladen, Wayne, Onslow, Lenoir, Sampson, and Warren among the eastern counties and in the southwest in Rowan, Gaston, Mecklenburg, Lincoln, and McDowell counties. See Map I for the percentage of slaves in the above counties. *State Journal, Wilmington Journal,* November-December, 1860; *North Carolina Whig,* December 4, 1860; Ellis Diary, November 28, 1860, Ellis Papers.

[68] December 12, 1860.

[69] *Western Democrat* (Charlotte) quoted in the *State Journal,* December 5, 1860; reports of meetings favoring a convention in the *State Journal,* December 19, 1860. The resolutions of the Union meetings which favored a convention indicate that some Unionists thought that a convention should be held in the hope that it might obtain guarantees for the rights of the South which would preserve the Union.

[70] F. L. Hawks to E. J. Hale, December 4, 1860, E. J. Hale Papers; John R. Winslow to John Devereux, December 8, 1860, Devereux Collec-

among the people an intense aversion to any move so revolutionary in character as secession and they welcomed assurances that their rights could be maintained in the Union.

The Unionists contended that the secession movement was a move of the politicians and that the people were opposed to it.[71] Seizing upon this argument, W. W. Holden wielded it effectively in his attack upon the radicals. The *Standard* charged that the *State Journal* was "the organ of a clique, who are using it to advance themselves to power—of a clique who care nothing for the people . . . —of a clique who, to advance their unholy ends, would rush this State into the vortex of disunion."[72] The charges of the *North Carolina Standard* that the secession movement was the work of politicians tended to discredit it with the masses of the people and to lessen the influence of the *State Journal.* It was the constant claim of Holden that the masses of the people were opposed to disunion.[73] Although he admitted the right of a state to secede in case the Constitution was violated, he was opposed to such action "from mere whim, impulse, or caprice."[74]

Another method used to discredit the radicals was to charge that North Carolina was being dictated to by South Carolina. The *Wilmington Herald* asked its readers: "People of North Carolina, shall this programme be carried out? Will you suffer yourselves to be spit upon in this way? Are you *submissionists* to the dictation of South Carolina? . . . Are you to be called *cowards* because you do not follow the crazy lead of that crazy state?"[75] The Union press also painted a discouraging picture

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tion, 1846-1867; N. Merrill to J. W. Bryan, November 28, 1860, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

[71] John H. Bryan to James W. Bryan, December 18, 1860, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill. A New York friend wrote J. W. Bryan, December 18, 1860: "Could we gather about 500 of the rank abolitionists and just the same number of political aspirants of the South, and putting them together build around them an impenetrable and insurmountable wall . . . and leave them forever to take care of each other—then I think this Country would be happy and contented." Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

[72] December 12, 1860.

[73] *North Carolina Standard,* November 28, December 5, 1860.

[74] *Ibid.,* December 5, 1860.

[75] Quoted in the *Raleigh Register,* December 5, 1860.

of a Southern confederacy. The life of such a confederacy, it declared, would be characterized by civil war, military despotism, the loss of constitutional liberty, and perpetual discord and conflict.[76]

Although denunciation of secession was an effective weapon, the conservatives were coming to realize that a more definite program than a "Watch and Wait" policy would have to be used to counteract the activities of the secessionists. Consequently, early in December, they began to make specific compromise proposals, a policy which they continued until all efforts at compromise had failed. It was the opinion of several leading Unionists that an effective campaign in support of a border confederacy would forestall the disunion movement.[77] Some proposed that all the states between New England and South Carolina be included in the new confederacy. Others thought that it should be composed of all the states except those of New England.[78]

Nor were the conservatives slow to hold meetings in various counties. On November 30 and 31, large constitutional Union meetings were held in Raleigh, at which Henry W. Miller and Z. B. Vance made appropriate speeches. The resolutions adopted at this time stated: 1. that the election of a sectional president was not a sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union; 2. that North Carolina would remain faithful to the Union "as long as the Constitution is respected and maintained —*but no longer*"; 3. that the laws of Northern states which nullify the fugitive slave act were contrary to the rights of the South and should be repealed; and 4. that the militia should be reorganized and armed.[79] The above resolutions represented the views of the conditional Unionists, those who were opposed to immediate secession and who favored remaining in the Union as long as the rights of the South were respected. At the other extreme were those who favored remaining in the Union at all costs. There were many gradations of opinion between these

[76] *North Carolina Standard,* December 5, 1860.

[77] Francis L. Hawks to E. J. Hale, December 6, 1860, E. J. Hale Papers.

[78] *Raleigh Register,* December 19, 1860.

[79] *North Carolina Standard,* December 5, 1860.

two. Both conditional and unconditional Unionists acted together in opposition to any immediate action. During November and early December, the Union meetings were concentrated mainly in the extreme East, the middle of the state, and the West.[80] Some of the Union meetings favored a convention, but a majority either opposed it or took no notice of it. It was clear that a majority of the people in the northeastern counties,[81] in the middle counties,[82] and in the West[83] were strongly Unionist in their views and intensely opposed to disunion. The Unionists were apparently sure of their strength with the people in November and early December and their campaign lacked the aggressiveness and definiteness which characterized that of their opponents.

In the midst of the discussions throughout the state came the secession of South Carolina on December 20. In Wilmington, a strong secession center, one hundred guns were fired in honor of the event.[84] The radicals voiced their approval of the course of South Carolina and attempted to excite sympathy for it among the people.[85] The *State Journal* expressed its approval as follows: "For one we sympatise [*sic*] with her. We give her credit for everything she may claim; and if she has erred she has done so on the side of truth and justice. She stands now

[80] Union meetings were held in Bertie, Pasquotank, and Carteret in the extreme East, Wake, Johnson, and Cumberland in the East, Alamance, Guilford, and Person in the center, and Surry in the West. A constitutional Union meeting was also held in Wilmington, strong secession center. It is significant to note, in this connection, that even in the areas of secession strength there was at that time a large Union minority. In the strongest Union areas, however, secession sentiment was negligible.

[81] Kenneth Rayner wrote Thomas Ruffin, December 25, 1860: "I was mortified to find . . . that the feeling in Hertford, Bertie, Gates, and adjacent country, was in a great measure in favour of 'the Union at any and all hazards'—in other words, unqualified submission. I heard from several sources, that the people who did not own slaves were swearing that they 'would not lift a finger to protect rich man's negroes.'" J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Ruffin Papers,* III, 109.

[82] O. A. Hanner to J. McL. Harrington, December, 1860, John McLean Harrington Papers.

[83] R. F. Eller to Z. B. Vance, December 17, 1860, Z. B. Vance Papers.

[84] *State Journal,* December 26, 1860.

[85] Wm. F. Martin to J. Johnston Pettigrew, January 12, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh; John W. Cameron to E. J. Hale, January 5, 1861; E. J. Hale Papers.

alone on this great continent the professed champion of Southern rights and Southern honor. Who first will strike her—who first take stand by her side?"[86]

Only among the radicals, however, was there any expression of joy at South Carolina's action. Conservative North Carolinians had no liking for such precipitate action[87] and condemned South Carolina for deserting its sister states, thereby making it more difficult for them to secure their rights.[88] The denunciatory language of the Charleston *Mercury* and the South Carolina radicals after the presidential election increased the aversion of North Carolina for the course of South Carolina.[89]

Although North Carolina did not approve of the action of South Carolina its people were opposed to any attempt to force South Carolina back into the Union. Conservatives and radicals alike condemned coercion.[90] A contemporary expressed the views of thousands besides himself when he wrote: "I am a union man but when they send men south it will change my

[86] December 26, 1860.

[87] "Dr. Kemp P. Battle told the story of a North Carolina mountaineer who attended a secession meeting where each speaker in turn laid emphasis upon the action or the opinion of South Carolina. Finally when a fresh orator began with a similar allusion, the mountaineer could restrain himself no longer, and rising to his full height, with arms upraised, he shouted 'For God's sake! Let South Carolina nullify, resolute, secess, and *be damned'!*" J. G. deR. Hamilton, "Secession in North Carolina," p. 33; chap. I in D. H. Hill, *Bethel to Sharpsburg.*

[88] *Fayetteville Observer,* December 24, 1860; H. Lesesne to J. J. Pettigrew, January 12, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh. James C. Johnston, Union Whig of Edenton, wrote J. Johnston Pettigrew, January 2, 1861: "Xmas was no doubt a very merry one with you in Charleston where every body is drunk or crazy & I hope the new year may be a happy one and that all of you may come to your senses before the end of it. . . . Poor creature [South Carolina] she is entirely deranged or drunk. . . . I wish Old Hickory had been in the White House, I think matters would have been differently managed. . . . I think So. Carolina acted a dastardly & cowardly part in sneaking like a *rat* out of a falling house instead of attempting to reform the government. . . . She has sacrificed those who would have been her friends & gratified her enemies by surrendering to them all power & plunder." Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[89] Wm. S. Pettigrew to J. J. Johnston, December 29, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill.

[90] D. L. Swain to President Buchanan, January 3, 1861, Walter Clark MSS.

notions. I can do nothing against my own people."[91] It was clear to all parties that the South would resist to the last extremity a policy of coercion.[92]

Noting the increase in disunion sentiment in the lower South and determined to resist its spread in North Carolina, the Unionists greatly increased their activities in the latter part of December and January. Many Union meetings were held;[93] they were especially numerous in the western[94] and central parts[95] of the state. Some of the meetings, especially in the West[96] where Union sentiment was very strong,[97] expressed unalterable opposition to disunion under any condition. The majority, however, took a conditional Union position; that is, they preferred to remain in the Union if possible, but if all attempts at compromise failed they would join the rest of the South. Leading conservatives urged the people to refrain from hasty action and to wait until all hope of compromise was gone before countenancing schemes of disunion. William A. Graham and David L. Swain in Orange, B. F. Moore, John H. Bryan, W. W. Holden, and George E. Badger in Wake, S. F. Patterson in Caldwell, Dr. Henry Joyner in Halifax, and John H. Haughton in Chatham and Craven were among the most active in support of the Union.[98]

The Union press, ingeniously led by Holden, used every conceivable argument against secession. It maintained that the

[91] Robt. G. Gurthy to Z. B. Vance, January 16, 1861, Z. B. Vance Papers.

[92] Wm. A. Eaton to L. O'B. Branch, January 24, 1861, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

[93] Between December 20 and the end of January, Union meetings were held in at least twenty counties. See the *North Carolina Standard,* December 26, 1860, January 2, 9, 16, 23, 1861; *Hillsborough Recorder,* December 26, 1860; newspaper clippings from the Asheville *Spectator* in Z. B. Vance Papers.

[94] Meetings were held in Caldwell, Macon, Wilkes, Surry, Iredell, Yancey, Buncombe, Madison, and Henderson counties.

[95] Meetings were held in Orange, Franklin, Johnston, Chatham, Wake, Alamance, Randolph, Montgomery, Anson, and Guilford counties.

[96] In Henderson, Iredell, and Madison counties.

[97] W. Caleb Brown to Z. B. Vance, January 19, 1861, G. W. Logan to Vance, January 15, 1861, J. W. Hamilton to Vance, January 14, 1861, Washington Henson to Vance, December 29, 1860, Z. B. Vance Papers.

[98] See the Application for Pardon of each of these men. Some of them had no statewide reputation but were influential in their own localities.

people if left to their own judgment "uncontrolled and untrammeled by the artful machinations of deceitful and corrupt demagogues" would not destroy the Union.[99] The *Times* (Greensboro) appealed to the people to "put not their trust in these secession leaders. They are working under a disguise; they are dissembling to deceive; they are playing upon your honesty and integrity to lead you from an imagined evil to a horrible reality; . . . Follow them, and soon you will reach anarchy under a military despotism."[100] The Unionists besought the people to give the conservatives of the North time to act and assured them that the majority of the Northern people was willing to grant the just demands of the South.[101] This argument was received favorably by the people who much preferred compromise to dissolution.[102]

The Union press emphasized the divergence of interests between the border states and the cotton states. The *Raleigh Register* did not think that the border states could be induced to join the cotton states in a confederacy under the leadership of South Carolina. It argued that "There is no identity of interest between North Carolina . . . and the Cotton States, and a union with them would be of short duration."[103] The *Greensborough Patriot* declared that the cotton states would reopen the African slave trade and consequently should North Carolina join a Southern confederacy its slave property would become worthless.[104] It was pointed out, moreover, that the manufacturing, mining, and other interests of North Carolina would be sacrificed to the free trade policy of the cotton states and the people would be subjected to direct taxation to provide sufficient revenue for the government.[105] The *Raleigh Register* was willing

[99] *Greensborough Patriot,* January 10, 1861; see also *North Carolina Standard,* December, 1860-January, 1861.

[100] January 19, 1861.

[101] *North Carolina Whig,* January 15, 1861; *North Carolina Standard,* January 30, 1861.

[102] J. Copius & S. Gudger to Z. B. Vance, January 27, 1861, Z. B. Vance Papers; A. W. Mangum to Pattie Mangum, January 29, 1861, Willie P. Mangum Papers.

[103] January 5, 1861.

[104] January 10, 1861.

[105] Z. B. Vance to W. W. Lenoir, December 26, 1860, Gen. Wm. T. Lenoir Papers.

for North Carolina to join a central confederacy but opposed uniting with the cotton states since in such a confederacy "she would have to contribute to the support of a government in the administration of which her voice, if heard at all, would not be heeded."[106] B. F. Moore of Raleigh wrote: "A Southern Confederacy will be worse than a rope of sand with So. Carolina at its head,—arrogant, self-willed and dictatorial as she is."[107]

As it became increasingly evident that the chances of compromise by Congress were very small, many of the most discerning of the Unionists began to lose hope of preserving the Union. Nevertheless, this despair did not turn many toward secession and union with the Gulf states. Instead, they had visions of a great middle confederacy, composed of the border slave and border free states.[108] It was the opinion of Vance that such a middle confederacy offered the most feasible means for a reconstruction of the Union. By the latter part of December, Vance was convinced that the Union could not be maintained and that it was extremely improbable that the North would offer terms satisfactory to the slaveholding states. He was, nevertheless, opposed to joining the cotton states for he thought that the interests of the border states would be sacrificed in such a government.[109] Vance did not publicly disclose this view because he knew that every additional statement of the improbability of compromise would increase the trend toward secession. Undoubtedly, Vance's belief that there was little chance of compro-

[106] January 9, 1861.

[107] Moore to his daughter, December, 1860, B. F. Moore Letters.

[108] See for example an interesting letter from W. W. Lenoir to Z. B. Vance, January 7, 1861, Z. B. Vance Papers; *North Carolina Standard,* January 9, 1861. Although the Gulf states had not yet seceded, a convention had been called in each of them and it was almost certain that they would secede. The states of the lower South withdrew from the Union on the following dates: South Carolina, December 20, 1860; Mississippi, January 8, 1861; Florida and Alabama, January 9; Georgia, January 18; Louisiana, January 26; and Texas, January 31.

[109] Z. B. Vance to W. W. Lenoir, December 26, 1860, Gen. Wm. T. Lenoir Papers. This is one of the most revealing letters which the present writer has found. It shows conclusively that Vance, in his own mind, had little hope of maintaining the existing Union. Believing that union with the cotton states would be suicidal to the interests of the border states, he was making plans for a border state confederacy.

mise by Congress and his hope that, while North Carolina was still opposed to secession, it would take the lead in organizing a middle confederacy, had much to do with his advocacy in January of a state convention.

In the weeks following the secession of South Carolina, the radicals redoubled their activities. The radical press sought to convince the people that secession was the only remaining way of preserving their rights and liberties. In a series of editorials, throughout the month of January, on "The Wrongs of the South," the *State Journal* reiterated all the usual arguments to prove that the rights of the South were not and would not be respected by the North.[110] It argued particularly that the election of Lincoln showed a determination "TO CONTINUE AND INCREASE THOSE WRONGS."[111] "North Carolinians," it asked, "are we *men,* and tamely suffer these wrongs and dishonors, or are we *slaves*—slaves to our fears and our blind adoration for what has become a vicious and unholy Union? . . . Trembling old age and helpless infancy and tender womanhood lift up their supplicating hand to *you,* to ask for one *manly, vigorous* effort for their salvation."[112]

The secession press also repeatedly ridiculed the assertions of the Unionists that the difficulties would be compromised. It pointed to the refusal of the Republicans in Congress to make concessions and declared that the Southern members of Congress were losing all hope of preserving the Union.[113] It also published several false reports of events calculated to excite the public mind and increase the feeling of hopelessness.[114] The Charlotte *Bulletin* specifically repudiated all compromise proposals, announcing: "We spit upon every plan to compromise . . . a Southern man who would now offer to compromise with

[110] January 2, 9, 16, 30, 1861; *Salisbury Banner,* December 25, 1860. See *supra,* page 188, for a summary of evidences of Northern opposition to Southern institutions.

[111] January 30, 1861.

[112] January 9, 1861.

[113] *State Journal,* December 26, 1860, January 2, 1861.

[114] *State Journal,* January 2, 9, 1861. It reported that federal troops were on the way to the South and that the fort at the mouth of the Cape Fear would soon be occupied; it also reported, January 2, that war had commenced at Charleston. Whether or not the editor of the *State Journal* was aware of the falsity of such reports at the time of publication cannot be determined.

the Northern States is a traitor to the South, and ought to be branded, if possible, with a more prominent mark than was placed upon the murderer Cain."[115] The radical press refused to consider seriously the proposals for a central confederacy, viewing such proposals "as so many insidiously disguised attempts" to divide the South.[116]

The propaganda of the press was supplemented by intense activity on the part of the secession leaders. The practice of holding Southern Rights and secession meetings was continued; several were held in the strong Union counties of Chatham, Moore, Wake, and Buncombe, in addition to the secession counties of the East and southwest.[117] Flag raisings were held in several localities to arouse Southern sentiment.[118] Clingman declared in a public letter that it was the purpose of the Black Republicans to dominate the South "to the extent even of abolishing slavery."[119] Warren Winslow advised his constituents that the only remedy for the existing state of affairs "is in your own prompt, honest and independent action."[120] Speaking in the Commons Hall, January 26, Senator Bragg said that North Carolina should immediately call a convention and should it fail to get adequate guarantees from the North it should join the South. He thought that the South could expect little from a party so opposed to its interests as the Republican. He pointed out that already it was probable that Congress would enact a high protective tariff, a Pacific railroad bill appropriating nearly 100,000,000 acres of the public lands, and a homestead bill.[121]

After Congress convened in December, a Committee of Thirty-three in the House and a Committee of Thirteen in the Senate were appointed to consider that part of President Buchanan's message dealing with the critical condition of the

[115] Quoted in *North Carolina Whig,* January 29, 1861.

[116] *Wilmington Journal,* January 3, 1861.

[117] *State Journal,* January, 1861; newspaper clippings from the *Asheville News* and the Asheville *Spectator* in Z. B. Vance Papers.

[118] *State Journal,* January, 1861; flag raisings were held in Wilmington, Greenville, and Wadesboro. The flags were of different patterns, some representing the sovereign state of North Carolina and some the slaveholding states of the South.

[119] *State Journal,* January 23, 1861.

[120] *Wilmington Journal,* January 3, 1861.

[121] *State Journal,* January 30, 1861.

country. Several compromise proposals including that of Senator Crittenden of Kentucky were submitted to the committees but all were defeated largely through the opposition of the Republican members. Before the end of December it was clear that there was little chance of Congress agreeing upon any substantial plan of adjustment.[122]

With the repeated failure of compromise efforts in Congress the leaders of the secession party became more determined in their opposition to compromise and more intent upon the secession of North Carolina and the formation of a Southern confederacy.[123] Thomas J. Green of Warren wrote, January 15: "The disease is to [*sic*] deep seated to be eradicated by the equivocal and oily promises of Seward, the gentle assurients [*sic*] of Crittenden or ridiculous threats of Johnson. . . . The cure must be radical and I see but one remedy—That remedy is when the whole Slave States or even a large portion of them cecede [*sic*] as cecede they will . . . then the people of the southern States will form such a constitution as in their judgements [*sic*] will best secure their welfare and happiness."[124] Governor Ellis, through correspondence with the secession leaders in the cotton states, assured them that North Carolina

[122] The proposal of Senator Crittenden, the most noted of the compromise plans presented in Congress, was concerned primarily with slavery in the territories. It proposed amendments to the Constitution which provided that the territories be divided along the line of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes; that slavery be forever prohibited in the territory north of that line; that it be allowed to go into the region south of the line and receive congressional protection there so long as the area remained under territorial governments; that when a state should be organized in the southern area the people thereof could exclude or maintain slavery as they desired; that the United States guarantee payment for escaped slaves; that slavery be protected in the states in which it was legal; that Congress should not interfere with the interstate slave trade. Several additional resolutions called for the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, the repeal of the Personal Liberty Acts, and the enforcement of the laws prohibiting the foreign slave trade. D. L. Dumond, *The Secession Movement,* chapter VIII, contains a good discussion of the efforts at compromise in Congress.

[123] J. S. Harrington to J. McL. Harrington, January 26, 1861, Harrington Papers, Durham; Governor Ellis to I. W. Garrott, January 30, 1861, Ellis Papers, Chapel Hill.

[124] Green to President Buchanan, rough copy in Gen. Thos. J. Green Papers.

would be with them practically by March 1 and "in due form after that."[125] He also thought that the formation of a general government by the seceding states would influence North Carolina to withdraw and join it, since many in the state then had "fears that discord may spring up among the retiring States which may prevent an efficient union for defence."[126] He advised Governor Brown of Georgia that "A clause [in the Confederate Constitution] to prohibit the importation of slaves from *other States and Countries* will . . . render it almost certain that Va. N. C. Md. and Kentucky will enter into the new Confederacy."[127]

The most prominent event enacted by the secessionists in the exciting month of January was the seizure on January 10 of Fort Caswell, on the Cape Fear River. On January 1, a delegation from Wilmington, headed by William S. Ashe, requested permission from the governor to take Ft. Caswell in order to prevent it from being garrisoned by federal troops.[128] Ellis did not believe the United States would attempt to garrison the fort. Consequently, he attempted to restrain the delegation from taking it because "Such a step, without an immediate necessity would have an injurious effect upon the cause of Southern rights in this State."[129] Disregarding Ellis' remonstrances, a group of citizens of Wilmington and Smithville organized themselves into a military company and seized the fort. On the following day, Governor Ellis ordered the fort evacuated. He then inquired of the War Department whether the administration intended to garrison the North Carolina forts, declaring that if he did not receive assurances that they would not be garrisoned prior to March 4, he would "not undertake to answer for the consequence." He was assured by Secretary of War Holt that the president did not contemplate garrisoning the forts in the Southern states.[130]

[125] Ellis to Rob. H. Smith, January 25, 1861, Ellis Papers.
[126] Ellis to Gov. Jos. E. Brown, January 14, 1861, Ellis Papers.
[127] January 21, 1861, Ellis Papers.
[128] Ellis Diary, December 31, 1860, *et seq.*, Ellis Papers.
[129] Ellis to Gov. Jos. E. Brown, January 14, 1861, Ellis Papers.
[130] Governor's Letter Book, p. 331 *et seq.* For an interesting and critical account of this episode see Josiah Turner, Jr., Application for Pardon.

The secession of South Carolina on December 20 and the events which followed decreased the possibility of compromise and weakened Union sentiment. Although the majority of North Carolinians did not approve the withdrawal of South Carolina, its action was proof to many that the dissolution of the Union was unavoidable.[131] This belief was increased by the secession of the Gulf states in January. The opposition of the Republicans in Congress to any concessions to the South produced a profound effect upon all groups of opinion.[132] The task of the conservatives to prevent a drift toward secession was made more difficult,[133] for with the failure of each effort at compromise the number of secessionists was increased.[134] One keen observer of public opinion wrote that nothing could induce North Carolina to secede except the conviction that "her vital interests" would not be safe in the Union. The failure of all efforts at compromise, he wrote, was rapidly convincing the people that there was little to hope for from the federal government and that "it is the intention of the North to reduce the South to the condition of a conquered province."[135] The failure to accomplish anything in the way of compromise after weeks of effort produced among many a desire for decided action.[136] Indicative of this sentiment was the comment of the Charlotte *Western Democrat* that it had opposed the immediate secession of North Carolina but now that three months had passed since

[131] "H. W." to P. C. Cameron, December 29, 1860, Cameron Papers; Application for Pardon of Richard Thorp, Samuel Hargrave, Dr. F. J. Haywood, James M. Wooten.

[132] John A. Gilmer, Union member of Congress, painted a gloomy picture of the prospects of compromise. Gilmer to D. H. Albright, January 8, 1861, John A. Gilmer Letters.

[133] D. F. Cardruil to Z. B. Vance, January 13, 1861, Z. B. Vance Papers.

[134] Jacob Thompson, commissioner from Mississippi to North Carolina, wrote, December 26, 1860: "As soon as all hope of a satisfactory adjustment of the slavery issues is abandoned, the voice of North Carolina will be well-nigh unanimous for a southern confederacy." Thompson to Gov. J. J. Pettus, *Report on case of J. C. G. Kennedy.*

[135] Wm. S. Pettigrew to J. Johnston Pettigrew, December 29, 1860, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill. This letter was not sent but a very similar one was written January 19, 1861.

[136] Anne Pettigrew to Isabel Bryan, January 17, 1861, John H. Bryan Papers, Raleigh.

Lincoln's election "unless the South can get her rights in the Union and have peace, and a guarantee against future agitation and aggressions, we are for dissolution."[137] Another contemporary wrote "We are drifting slowly into Secession as inevitable under present circumstances."[138]

The majority of the members of Congress from North Carolina were favorable to compromise and used their efforts to obtain an adjustment of the difficulties which would be satisfactory to the South. This was especially true of the Whig members, John A. Gilmer, James M. Leach, W. N. H. Smith, and Z. B. Vance. Gilmer, Leach, and Smith made sincere appeals in their speeches for compromise and a preservation of the Union.[139] Thomas L. Clingman, Burton Craige, and Thomas Ruffin were the most radical of the North Carolina delegation. Both Clingman and Ruffin made disunion speeches in Congress, and Craige obstructed rather than aided compromise efforts.[140] The remainder of the North Carolina delegation, L. O'B. Branch, Thomas Bragg, and Warren Winslow occupied a position between the Unionists and the immediate secessionists and might be called conditional secessionists. While opposing immediate action and willing to accept an honorable compromise, they leaned strongly toward the South.

The secession of South Carolina, followed by the secession of the Gulf states, and the failure of efforts at compromise in Congress increased immeasurably the sentiment for a convention to take into consideration the crisis in national affairs. The majority of county meetings, including secession and Union meetings, held in December and January favored the calling of a convention. A considerable number of Union meetings, how-

[137] January 29, 1861.

[138] Wm. A. Walsh to L. O'B. Branch, January 15, 1861, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham. The *Newbern Progress*, heretofore a Union paper, in the latter part of January began advocating secession. *Raleigh Register*, January 26, 1861.

[139] Speech of Gilmer, January 26, 1861, *Cong. Globe*, 36 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 580-583; speech of Leach, February 7, 1861, *ibid.*, appendix, pp. 196-199; speech of Smith, February 8, 1861, *ibid.*, appendix, pp. 203-207.

[140] Speeches of Clingman, December 4, 1860, February 4, 1861, *Cong. Globe*, 36 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 3-5, 727; speech of Ruffin, February 20, 1861, *ibid.*, appendix, p. 225; *ibid.*, pp. 853-854.

ever, continued to oppose such a move.[141] The majority of the press, including both Union and secession papers, also favored a convention.[142] All except two members of Congress publicly expressed their approval.[143] Moreover, a number of prominent Unionists, including Z. B. Vance,[144] W. N. H. Smith,[145] and David L. Swain,[146] urged the call of a convention. The conservatives, realizing that a majority of the people was opposed to secession and perceiving the drift toward secession, hoped that a convention might take some action to prevent secession and to secure a compromise of the difficulties.

When the legislature reassembled on January 7, heated debate soon began on the convention bill and continued until its passage on January 29. The bill as reported by the committee on federal relations made no mention of a two-thirds vote of each house which according to the constitution was necessary for the call. The majority of the committee thought at the time the report was submitted that a two-thirds vote could not be

[141] Legislative Papers, January, 1861. Meetings in at least thirty counties, some secession and some Union, urged a convention, whereas meetings in fifteen counties, all Union, opposed a convention. The meetings which favored a convention were fairly well distributed throughout the state. Those against a convention were held in the central, western, and extreme eastern sections of the state, strong Union areas, and areas which cast majorities against the convention in February. The counties in which meetings opposed to a convention were held included Randolph, Caldwell, Stanly, Alamance, Rowan, Moore, Montgomery, Chatham, Richmond, Orange, Granville, Ashe, Wilkes, Bertie, and Beaufort.

[142] The *Greensborough Patriot,* January 10, 1861, thought the people should decide whether or not a convention should be called and opposed its call by the legislature.

[143] These two were John A. Gilmer and James M. Leach; see letter of Democratic members to the General Assembly, January 4, *State Journal,* January 12, 1861.

[144] Letter of Z. B. Vance, *Raleigh Register,* January 16, 1861. Vance wrote: "I do not regard the call of a convention as a disunion movement. . . . Firm, temperate, and decided action may save the rights of the states and the Union as well. Non-action will precipitate us into disunion. A convention, while demanding terms of the Northern people, can also make our voices heard among the Southern States whose course is rapidly inoculating the people with dogma which we cannot approve."

[145] Letter of W. N. H. Smith, *Raleigh Register,* January 8, 1861, quoted in *Fayetteville Observer,* February 2, 1861.

[146] D. L. Swain to J. J. Pettigrew, January 15, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

gained for a convention. Consequently it held that a two-thirds vote was required only for a constitutional convention and was not necessary for a convention limited to the discussion of national affairs.[147] This feature of the bill was immediately criticized by the opposition and consequently on January 9 W. W. Avery in the Senate and S. J. Person in the House introduced a substitute making a two-thirds vote necessary for the call. The substitute, however, made no provision for submitting the work of the convention to the people for approval. The opposition immediately pointed out this defect of the bill and on January 14 Avery introduced an amendment which provided that any ordinance which the convention passed in regard to a separation of the state from the Union be submitted to the people for their ratification or rejection.[148]

The Unionists, led by D. D. Ferebee of Camden, George N. Folk of Watauga, J. J. Yeates of Hertford, Richard S. Donnell of Beaufort, and P. T. Henry of Bertie in the House and Josiah Turner of Orange, David Outlaw of Bertie, Jonathan Worth of Randolph, and John M. Morehead of Guilford in the Senate continued to criticize the bill and to obstruct its passage by postponing the election of delegates until after March 4. They also demanded that the call be contingent upon the approval of the people at the time the delegates were elected, and on January 14, Charles E. Clark, Unionist of Craven, introduced an amendment to that effect. The main support for the bill continued to come from the secessionists, led by W. W. Avery of Burke, V. C. Barringer of Cabarrus, and John Walker of Mecklenburg in the Senate and R. R. Bridgers of Edgecombe, S. J. Person of New Hanover, and N. N. Fleming of Rowan in the House. Intense feeling characterized the debate and at times it flared into open violence.[149] One member wrote: "We have hot times

[147] W. W. Avery and S. P. Hill to Thomas Ruffin, December 7, 1860, S. J. Person and R. R. Bridgers to Ruffin, December 11, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Ruffin Papers,* III, 106-107; John D. Taylor to T. D. McDowell, December 12, 1860, C. B. Heller Collection.

[148] See proceedings in *North Carolina Standard,* January 15, 1861.

[149] The debate and proceedings can best be followed in the newspapers since the speeches are not printed in the journals. See *North Carolina Standard,* January 10-26, 1861.

hear [*sic*] and two fights and I shall not be surprised if we brake [*sic*] up in [a] row for there is a good deal of bad feeling hear [*sic*] at this time."[150]

The secession of the Gulf states, the seizure of Fort Caswell, the numerous petitions to the legislature urging a convention, and the excited state of public opinion had the effect of increasing in the legislature the supporters of a convention. Undoubtedly, many conservatives felt that a convention might calm the public mind somewhat and might even effect some sort of compromise of the existing difficulties. Moreover, they were convinced that a majority of the delegates would be opposed to secession and consequently the convention could do little harm. Finally, a sufficient number of Unionists joined the secessionists to enable the bill to secure the necessary two-thirds vote, and on January 29 it passed.[151] The bill provided that the election of delegates should be held on February 28, 1861, each county electing a number of delegates equal to its representation in the commons, and at the same time the people were to vote for or against a convention. If the majority favored the convention it should assemble at the summons of the governor on a date not earlier than March 11. The bill restricted its action to federal affairs and required that its action be submitted to the people.[152]

[150] J. S. Harrington to John McL. Harrington, January 19, 1861, Harrington Papers.

[151] The bill passed the Senate by the vote of 37 to 9 and the House by the vote of 86 to 27, on January 24. In the Senate, Dockery, Morehead, Outlaw, Ramsay, Sharpe, Slaughter, Spencer, Turner, and Worth, representing the counties of Alamance, Randolph, Orange, Guilford, Hertford, Iredell, Wilkes, Alexander, Richmond, Robeson, Rowan, Davie, Tyrrell, and Hyde, opposed it; in the House its opponents were Barringer, Carson, Clarke of Davidson, Cowles, Crumpler, Davis of Rutherford, Dickson, Donnell, Farrow, Ferebee, Gaither, Gorrell, Green of Chatham, Green of Stanly, Guthrie, Hanes, Henry, Horton, Kelly, McCleese, Martin, Mendenhall, Patterson, Poindexter, Simonton, Williams of Pasquotank, and Winslow, representing the counties of Montgomery, Alexander, Davidson, Yadkin, Ashe, Alleghany, Rutherford, Caldwell, Beaufort, Hyde, Camden, Moore, Guilford, Chatham, Stanly, Orange, Iredell, Bertie, Wilkes, Tyrrell, Pasquotank, and Randolph. *Senate Journal 1860-61,* p. 245; *House Journal 1860-61,* p. 374. There were minor differences in the House and Senate bills and it was not until January 29 that the House concurred in the Senate bill by a vote of 81 to 24. *House Journal 1860-61,* p. 441.

[152] *Laws of North Carolina 1860-61,* pp. 27-31.

Meanwhile, in response to the invitation of Virginia, on January 26 the legislature elected Thomas Ruffin, D. M. Barringer, D. S. Reid, John M. Morehead, and George Davis as commissioners to the Peace Conference to be held at Washington, February 4. On the same day, David L. Swain, M. W. Ransom, and John L. Bridgers were elected as commissioners to the meeting of the delegates of the seceded states at Montgomery. The resolutions of appointment were the same for both commissions. They were sent for the purpose "of effecting an honorable and amicable adjustment of all the difficulties that distract the country upon the basis of the Crittenden resolutions as modified by the legislature of Virginia, and for the purpose of consulting for our common peace, honor, and safety."[153] Unionists were in the majority on both commissions.[154]

After the appointment of the two commissions and the passage of the convention bill, the legislature enacted legislation to provide for protection and to maintain peace and order in the existing excitement and the troublous times ahead. A militia law was passed making all white males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years liable to service. Provision was made for the organization of a volunteer corps of ten thousand men, and the governor was authorized to increase the number by twenty thousand in case of invasion.[155] On the subject of incendiary literature, a law was passed imposing the death penalty upon a person convicted of circulating any publication the tendency of which "is to cause slaves to become discontented with the bondage in which they are held by their masters . . . and free negroes to be dissatisfied with their social condition." Likewise, inciting in slaves or free Negroes "a spirit of insurrection, conspiracy, or rebellion" was made a capital offense.[156]

[153] *Resolutions 1860-61,* p. 78.

[154] Of the commissioners to Washington, Ruffin and Reid were Democrats and Barringer, Morehead, and Davis had been Whigs. Reid was a moderate secessionist and Davis, although a professed Unionist, was inclining toward secession. Of the commissioners to Montgomery, Swain was a Union Whig, Ransom a Union Democrat, and Bridgers a secession Democrat. This is the classification given in J. G. deR. Hamilton, "Secession in North Carolina," p. 30, and is probably a correct one.

[155] *Laws of North Carolina 1860-61,* Chap. 24.

[156] *Ibid.,* Chap. 23.

Free Negroes were prohibited from owning arms[157] and from having control of slaves.[158] Another act forbade the emancipation of slaves by will.[159] After thus providing for the emergencies which might arise in the troublous future, the legislature adjourned on February 25.

[157] *Ibid.*, Chap. 34.
[158] *Laws of North Carolina 1860-61*, Chap. 36.
[159] *Ibid.*, Chap. 37.

CHAPTER X

THE CONVENTION ELECTION

With the passage of the convention bill, January 29, both Unionists and secessionists began an active campaign to obtain control of the convention. Although the number of Union newspapers constantly diminished with the failure to accomplish any compromise, the majority of the most influential journals in the state, including the *North Carolina Standard,* the *Raleigh Register,* and the *Fayetteville Observer,* vigorously opposed secession during the campaign.[1] W. W. Holden directed the campaign of the conservative press and his paper was the most effective opponent of disunion. Holden was at his best, never showing more ingenuity or greater political acumen. At the outset, he took the offensive and forced the issue, thereby putting his opponents on the defensive. There is only one issue, proclaimed the *North Carolina Standard,* and that one is "UNION or DISUNION!" All other issues are insignificant in comparison with the struggle to maintain the glorious union of the states and to defeat those who would mislead the people of North Carolina. It advised the people: "Nominate no man—vote for no man who will not pledge himself against secession and disunion. BE SURE THAT YOU KNOW YOUR MEN BEFORE YOU COMMIT YOURSELVES TO THEIR SUPPORT."[2]

Every means calculated to produce suspicion and distrust of the secession leaders was ingeniously used by the Union press. It appealed to the voters with the time-worn but ever effective

[1] Among the leading Union papers were the following: the *North Carolina Standard,* and Raleigh *Banner* (Democratic) and the *Raleigh Register, Fayetteville Observer,* Salisbury *Carolina Watchman, Greensborough Patriot, Iredell Express, Washington Dispatch,* Kinston *Advocate,* Hendersonville *Times,* Salem *Press,* Asheville *Spectator,* Wadesboro *Argus,* and *Hillsborough Recorder* (Whig), and the Greensboro *Times* (non-political).

[2] February 6, 1861.

argument of the common man versus the aristocrat, democracy versus plutocracy.[3] The wealthy minority, it charged, was attempting to lead the people into disunion, the benefits of which would be received by the wealthy minority and the burdens borne by the masses. It warned that separation from the Union would mean a large standing army, a destructive war, the loss of civil liberties, and heavy taxes which would fall upon the common people.[4]

To those who said there was no hope of maintaining the Union, the *North Carolina Standard* replied, "It is criminal to say there is 'no hope for the Union.' "[5] It declared that the conservative masses of the North were now beginning to show their willingness to compromise. "The lights of concord, of justice, and reconciliation are streaming along the Northern heavens," proclaimed the *North Carolina Standard*.[6] It also pointed to the conservative attitude of the other border states. Tennessee had voted down a convention, the majority of delegates in the Virginia convention were Unionists, and Kentucky showed no disposition to secede.[7]

The conservatives flooded the state with speeches and documents. John A. Gilmer distributed over 100,000 copies of anti-secession speeches made by leading members of Congress.[8] Z. B. Vance circulated among his constituents in the mountain district a printed speech in opposition to disunion. Secession, he contended, would not make the border states safer but on the contrary would make their condition worse. It would mean heavier taxation to support a separate government. Civil war, with all its direful consequences, was likely to be the result of a dissolution of the Union. He denied that conflicting interests between North and South made a separation inevitable, and declared that the sections should supplement each other. As for slavery in the territories, he argued that it was impractical to attempt to carry slavery into areas not suited to it. High tariffs might be escaped by separation, but import duties would only

[3] *North Carolina Standard,* February 27, 1861.
[4] *Ibid.,* February 13, 1861. [5] February 6, 1861.
[6] February 6, 1861. [7] *Ibid.,* February 13, 1861.
[8] John A. Gilmer, Application for Pardon; "State Rights" to L. O'B. Branch, February 21, 1861, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

be replaced by export duties and direct taxes more objectionable than tariff duties.[9] William A. Graham's letter to the *Wilmington Herald*, February 5, 1861, in opposition to secession was printed and circulated among the voters. In this letter, he wrote: "I would have North Carolina to signalize her devotion to that constitution, which her people have loved so well, and whose covenants she has so faithfully kept, by moderation, forbearance, and abstinence from precipitate action."[10]

The radical press was placed at a disadvantage by the contention of its opponents that the issue was Union or disunion and devoted much of its attention to convincing the voters that such was not the issue.[11] "The question is not Union or Disunion," insisted the *State Journal*, but *"What shall she* [North Carolina] *do to protect herself."*[12] The Union was already dissolved, it maintained, and the decision for North Carolina was whether it should go with the North or with the South.[13] "You must choose your enemies of the North or your brothers and friends of the South," advised the *Salisbury Banner;* "The Union is entirely gone, and he that now says the Union is not broken up and dissolved forever is either crazy or a deceiver."[14] The *Wilmington Journal* denied that it favored secession *per se*, but declared that it advocated the maintenance of "our rights and our equality" which are no longer safe.[15]

The secession press denounced the abolitionists and declared that the result of Republican rule would be the abolition of slavery, resulting in a condition of race equality in the slaveholding states that remained in the Union. The racial aspect of

[9] Z. B. Vance *To the Citizens of the Eighth Congressional District.*

[10] Printed copy of the letter in Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[11] The leading secession papers during the campaign were: the *State Journal, Wilmington Journal,* Goldsboro *Rough Notes,* Goldsboro *Tribune, Salisbury Banner,* Plymouth *Roanoke Cresset,* Charlotte *Bulletin,* Charlotte *Western Democrat, Asheville News,* Tarboro *Southerner,* Hillsboro *Plaindealer* (Democratic) and the Wilmington *Herald,* and Charlotte *North Carolina Whig* (Whig). During February and the months following there was a steady drift toward secession among the press; but the files of the papers are not complete enough in most cases to indicate exactly when they changed from support of the Union to advocacy of secession.

[12] February 13, 1861.

[13] *State Journal,* February 13, 1861.

[14] February 19, 1861.

[15] February 7, 1861.

slavery underlay much of the Southern hatred of abolitionism. The problem of an uncivilized alien race was solved under the slavery system. What could be done with the Negro were he free? The *Wilmington Journal* declared that the policy of the Republican party would lead to the lowering of the white men in the South to the level of the Negro, since the Negro from his nature could not rise to the level of the whites.[16] The *Salisbury Banner* described the alternative to joining the Southern Confederacy as follows: "Do you desire the millions of negro population in the South, to be set free among us, to stalk abroad in the land, following the dictates of their own natural instincts, committing depredations, rapine, and murder upon the whites? This is the best that we can expect. It is the natural consequence of Abolitionism, and if this is what you desire, then vote for a Union with the Northern confederacy, over which the exponents of this execrable doctrine, Abe Lincoln and the free nigger [Hannibal Hamlin] will preside."[17] The Plymouth *Roanoke Cresset* wrote that it "would as soon clasp a hyena in love's embrace as hold fellowship with the infernal abolitionists, who steal our negroes, [and] insult our persons."[18] Lincoln's speech at Indianapolis, February 9, in which he advanced extreme consolidation views was denounced by the radical press as disclosing "a bloody purpose to coerce with fire and sword, the people of the seceded States."[19] The announcement of such a policy by the president-elect left North Carolina but one choice, wrote the *State Journal*, either to join the Black Republicans in a policy of coercion or to join its

[16] February 21, 1861.

[17] February 19, 1861.

[18] February 9, 1861.

[19] *State Journal*, February 20, 1861; the Wilmington *Herald*, and other secession papers took the same position. Lincoln said that the collection of the revenues and the possession of the forts and other property of the federal government in the seceded states would not be coercion or invasion. Moreover, he implied that a state had few rights above those of a county other than those rights conferred upon it in the Constitution. Withdrawal from the Union, he intimated, destroyed those rights. In addition, he raised the question as to whether the United States could not compel the obedience of a state to the same extent that the latter could compel the obedience of a county within the state. John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, III, 294-295.

brethren of the South in resistance.[20] It was also occasionally pointed out that the Southern Confederacy would probably prohibit the slave trade with states outside the Confederacy. Such a prohibition would greatly injure North Carolina by diminishing the value of its slave property.[21]

In the campaign the radicals designated their party as the states' rights or Southern Rights party, whereas the Unionists termed them the disunionists or the secessionists. The Unionists referred to themselves as the Constitutional Union party or the Union party, but were called submissionists by their opponents. In reality, there were three fairly well-defined groups: the Unionists, who at that time were unequivocally opposed to withdrawal from the Union; the conditional Unionists, who were opposed to secession until it could be ascertained whether or not the South would be given assurances of its rights but who were ready to go for secession should those assurances not be given; and the secessionists, who favored immediate withdrawal from the Union. Between these groups, there were, of course, gradations of opinion among individuals.

The Unionists were divided in their attitude toward the convention. Some of them favored a convention because they thought that the majority of delegates would be opposed to secession. They even had hope that the convention might obtain some guarantees from the North which would weaken the arguments of their opponents and prevent them from precipitating the state into disunion. A large and influential group of the Unionists, on the other hand, viewed the convention as a disunion move and feared that if that body met, the secessionists would find some way to lead the state into disunion. This group directed its efforts in the campaign toward defeating the convention.

The leaders among the Unionists were drawn from both Democratic and Whig ranks. Such leading Democrats as Bedford Brown of Caswell, R. P. Dick of Guilford, John Hill of Stokes, David S. Reid and I. C. McDowell of Burke, and W. W. Holden of Wake were some of the most vigorous op-

[20] February 20, 1861.
[21] *Salisbury Banner,* February 19, 1861.

ponents of secession. The great majority of the leading Whigs opposed secession in the campaign. With some exceptions, the leading secessionists came from the ranks of the Democratic party.

The campaign was pressed vigorously by both Unionists and secessionists as public interest reached an unprecedented height. The candidates for the convention made numerous speeches; and circulars, newspapers, and printed speeches were used in an effort to sway public opinion.[22]

In the extreme eastern counties, the Unionists carried everything before them, especially in the northeastern section. There, William E. Mann of Pasquotank, Watson L. Daniel of Hertford, and William E. Bond of Chowan actively campaigned for the Union. Daniel in his speeches urged the people to vote against the convention.[23] In Washington County, a heated contest took place between William S. Pettigrew, who was supported by the secessionists and some of the conditional Unionists, and Charles Latham, who received the support of the unconditional Unionists and the majority of the conditional Unionists. Pettigrew and Latham spoke several times in various parts of the county during the campaign. Pettigrew's speech at Plymouth, February 19, contained the views of a moderate secession candidate. First, he favored the call of a convention; secondly, he advocated a constitutional Union "with such additional guarantees as the aggressive character now manifested by the North render necessary for our safety. But these guarantees we must have, and if we do not demand & secure them the days of Southern independence & Southern safety have passed away forever. Nor am I willing that hostile bands be permitted to invade the soil of our sister Southern states which after they have crushed them will . . . turn to polute the soil of our own dear state." Thirdly, he regretted the refusal of the Black Republicans in Congress to accept the Crittenden compromise.

[22] The leading papers of the state carried only scanty accounts of the contests in most of the counties, and since the files of local papers are very incomplete, it has been impossible to obtain a full account of the campaign.

[23] Applications for Pardon of Wm. E. Mann and of Watson L. Daniel; Dillard, "Secession Movement in Chowan County," pp. 30-31.

Fourthly, he criticized the Republican party for appropriating money and squandering the public lands to aid a railroad to the Pacific and for the abominable tariff bill then before Congress. Finally, he expressed the view that the American Union was a confederation of sovereign states.[24] Latham appealed to the prejudices of the non-slaveholders in the upper part of the county, declaring himself to be the poor man's candidate and picturing Pettigrew as the candidate of the property-holders. Latham took the position that North Carolina should remain in the Union provided it could gain guarantees of its constitutional rights.[25]

In the middle eastern slaveholding counties, from Warren, Halifax, and Northampton on the north to Columbus, Brunswick, and New Hanover on the south, the secessionists were in a large majority and with the exception of a few counties experienced no great opposition. In Northampton, Halifax, and Granville, the Unionists led by F. J. Person of Northampton, John Bullock of Granville, and M. L. Wiggins, Edward Conigland, and Richard H. Smith of Halifax were very active.[26] In Wayne and Lenoir, also, the Unionists led by George W. Collier and George and John C. Washington attempted to prevent the election of disunion delegates, but to no avail.[27] In most of the other counties in this section the secessionists had little opposition. Led by William S. Ashe and Robert H. Cowan of New Hanover, A. H. Harrington of Nash, and John L. Bridgers and

[24] MS. copy in Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill. In a speech, February 26, Pettigrew said: "If she [the North] continues to trample on the Constitution & to laugh at & despise all the dangers & perils by which she is incircling [*sic*] us as the serpant entwines his folds around his unsuspecting victim: then fellow-citizens, disguise it as you may—and no man laments it more than I—there are but two horns of the dilemma, you must choose between them. North Carolina must either become a conquered province, degraded, despised, her property taken from her, ruled over by a military tyrant. . . . If not then, if we cannot obtain the security of our rights . . . the Convention must determine in what way we are to take care of ourselves."

[25] Wm. S. Pettigrew to Jas. C. Johnston, March 12, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Chapel Hill. This collection contains an interesting and detailed account of the campaign in Washington County.

[26] See their Applications for Pardon.

[27] See their Applications for Pardon.

Kenneth Thigpen of Edgecombe, among others, they won an overwhelming victory.[28] In Granville, A. W. Venable, T. S. Hargrove, and S. S. Royster at frequent meetings urged the voters to approve the convention and elect Southern Rights delegates. In numerous speeches, Venable assured the people that secession could be accomplished peaceably. Drawing a silk handkerchief from his pocket and waving it over the crowd, he exclaimed "I will wipe up every drop of blood shed in the war with this handkerchief of mine."[29]

One of the bitterest contests occurred in Wake County. The Union candidates, W. W. Holden, George E. Badger, and Quentin Busbee, were opposed by Nathaniel G. Rand, Gaston H. Wilder, and A. M. Lewis. Holden expressed ultra-Union views, stating on February 14 that should federal troops be marched across North Carolina to reinforce Ft. Sumter their passage ought not to be resisted.[30] The other Unionists did not profess such extreme views. The radical press bitterly denounced Holden during the campaign and pointed to his inconsistency on Southern Rights and to his long opposition to the views of Badger, with whom he was then in accord. So bitter against Holden were the secessionists that they directed their campaign primarily against him personally.[31]

The piedmont area was the strongest Union section of the state. In that area, the Unionists were led by men who had been prominent in the political life of the state and who had great influence with the voters in that vicinity. Chief among them were William A. Graham of Orange, Edwin G. Reade of Person, John Manning, Jr., of Chatham, Rufus McAden of Alamance, William Long and Bedford Brown of Caswell, Ralph Gorrell, R. P. Dick and John A. Gilmer of Guilford, Jonathan Worth, William Burney, and Alfred Brown of Randolph, Na-

[28] *State Journal,* February 13, 20, 1861; *Wilmington Journal,* February 14, 28, 1861.

[29] *State Journal,* February 20, 1861; Robert W. Winston, *It's a Far Cry,* p. 27.

[30] *State Journal,* February 20, 1861; *North Carolina Standard,* February 27, 1861.

[31] "Holden's Record," a broadside published by the *State Journal,* Crabtree Jones Collection; see the *State Journal* and the *North Carolina Standard* for an account of the campaign.

thaniel Boyden of Rowan, and Alfred Dockery of Richmond.[32] A speech of William A. Graham reveals some of the arguments used by the Unionists. Graham stated that secession was not advisable because if the attempt proved unsuccessful it would mean the abolition of slavery. If successful, a line would be placed between Virginia and Pennsylvania and slaves escaping over the line would become free. By a continuation of this practice Virginia would become a free state and the process would go on until the whole South became free territory. Since the South was situated next to the North geographically, friendship between the two sections was virtually necessary. Such being the case, one nation was preferable to two. He did not think that the election of Lincoln proved that the majority of the people were opposed to slavery because Lincoln received a minority of the popular vote. The argument advanced by the secessionists that separation could be accomplished peaceably, he termed "absurd"; separation, he said, would be followed by war.[33]

The Unionists in the middle counties also actively opposed the convention. W. D. Dowd, Alexander Kelly, and E. G. L. Barringer, representatives in the legislature from Moore and Montgomery counties, distributed among their constituents a printed circular denouncing the convention as a disunion scheme. The circular read: "But you will be told there can be no danger in calling the Convention—that its acts are to be ratified by you before they can bind you. Be not deceived. The bad men who are leading this revolution declare that the Act of Assembly can't bind the Convention—that it may lawfully refuse to ask for your ratification. . . . If you would stay in the Union, the safest way is to vote 'No Convention.'"[34] Jonathan Worth, Nathaniel Boyden, and Alfred Dockery also opposed the convention in the counties of Alamance, Randolph, Rowan, and Richmond.[35] Worth advised the people of Randolph and Ala-

[32] See their Applications for Pardon. A. M. Scales and David S. Reid of Rockingham and Henry K. Nash and Dr. Pride Jones of Orange were the most active secessionists in this area.

[33] Copy of a speech in Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[34] A photostatic copy in Alexander Kelly's Application for Pardon.

[35] Applications for pardon of Boyden and of Dockery.

mance to "Believe not those who may tell you this convention is called to *save* the Union. It is called to *destroy* it. If you desire to preserve the Union vote 'No Convention.' "[36]

The secessionists were especially strong in the cotton counties of the southwest. Led by James W. Osborne and William Johnston of Mecklenburg, V. C. Barringer of Cabarrus, H. R. Massey of Union, C. P. Henkle of Catawba, and John F. Hoke of Lincoln, they overwhelmed the almost negligible opposition furnished by the Unionists.[37]

In the western counties, where the question of Union or disunion had "split Whig & Democracy all into h—l," the campaign was characterized by intense excitement.[38] The opposition to disunion was intense in most of the western counties, and most of the leading Unionists urged the people to vote against a convention. John B. Palmer of Watauga, James Callaway and A. T. Davidson of Wilkes, M. Patton of Buncombe, G. W. Logan of Rutherford, and B. S. Gaither, William C. Erwin, Thomas G. Walton, and John W. McElrath of Burke actively opposed secession and told the people that should a convention be called an effort would be made to take the state out of the Union.[39]

Only in Jackson, Haywood, Burke, Buncombe, Rutherford, and Polk were the secessionists very active. In Jackson, the local political leaders were secessionists,[40] and William H. Thomas, member of the State Senate distributed circulars among his constituents advocating a withdrawal from the Union.[41] W. W. Avery of Burke, and Marcus Erwin and N. W. Woodfin of Buncombe were active in favor of secession. Erwin and

[36] See Worth's Address to People of Randolph and Alamance, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Worth,* I, 129-133. In the counties of Alamance, Randolph, Rowan, Moore, Montgomery, and Guilford, 9,615 votes were cast against a convention and only 1,549 for a convention.

[37] *State Journal,* February 13, 20, 1861; *North Carolina Whig,* February 26, 1861.

[38] S. O. Deaver to Z. B. Vance, January 28, 1861, Z. B. Vance Papers. This collection contains much information on public opinion in the western part of the state.

[39] See their Applications for Pardon.

[40] Wm. L. Love to Z. B. Vance, February 1, 1861, Vance Papers.

[41] Circular quoted in the *Raleigh Register,* February 23, 1861.

Avery distributed circulars among their constituents which declared: that the interests of North Carolina were similar to those of the other Southern states; that the Republican party would eventually emancipate the slaves thereby putting a large body of free Negroes in their midst; and that separation could be accomplished without war. Appealing to the non-slaveholding white's dislike of the Negro, the circular stated:

"In addition to the terrible calamity of having three hundred thousand idle, vagabond free negroes turned loose upon you with all the privileges of white men—voting with you; sitting on juries with you; going to school with your children, and intermarrying with the white race . . . wages of all kinds of labor will be diminished; the price of agricultural productions of all kinds will fall so low that our farmers will be ruined."[42]

The course of events outside the state played an important part in determining public opinion in North Carolina. The tariff, railroad, and homestead bills then pending before Congress unquestionably influenced the attitude of some of the political leaders in the state. Speaking in the Senate, February 4, Clingman called attention to the effect of these measures upon Union sentiment:

> Remember, sir, the South has no share in this copartnership. The Northeast is to get the tariff; the Northwest the Pacific railroad and the homestead bill; and the Republicans, or Abolitionists, are to get anti-slavery. . . . The sagacious men of the South see the danger; and sooner than submit to be cheated and plundered in this mode, with the prospect in the future of the abolition of slavery and the utter destruction of their section, they are coming resolutely into the struggle.[43]

The refusal of the Republicans in Congress to compromise was also having the effect of transforming Union men into secessionists.[44] The people were advised that there was no possibility that Congress would grant constitutional guarantees to the South, and that North Carolina must take the choice of

[42] Quoted in the *State Journal*, February 20, 1861.

[43] *Cong. Globe*, 36 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 726-727.

[44] *Times*, February 16, 1861; John T. Moore to James W. Bryan, February 8, 1861, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill; I. S. Maxwell to Z. B. Vance, February 11, 1861, Vance Papers.

seceding or of aiding Lincoln in a policy of coercion.[45] Moreover, the withdrawal of so many Southern states and the failure of compromise efforts had converted many Unionists to the opinion that a separation of all the slaveholding states was necessary before any reconstruction of the Union was possible.[46] The moderation displayed by the Southern Confederacy created a favorable impression among North Carolinians.[47] Commissioner Samuel Hall of Georgia told the legislature that the majority of the people in the cotton states was opposed to reopening the African slave trade and that the Southern Confederacy did not restrict the importation of slaves from the border states because it was "unwilling to constrain the action of a free people."[48]

Hope of compromise, however, was still present among the people of the state.[49] The election of a Union majority to the Virginia convention strengthened Union influence,[50] for many were convinced that the action of Virginia would determine the course to be followed by North Carolina.[51] The people of the state looked to the Peace Conference at Washington to accomplish some real compromise and waited anxiously for the report of its action.

During the few days preceding election day, the secession press printed reports from David S. Reid, delegate to the Peace Conference, and Senators Bragg and Clingman that nothing

[45] T. L. Clingman to J. W. Osborne, February 18, 1861, Clingman, *Writings,* pp. 554-555; Clingman sent a telegram to that effect to the Charlotte *Bulletin* on the same day.

[46] J. W. Patton to D. L. Swain, February 5, 1861, David L. Swain Papers; Rob. J. McDowell, Application for Pardon.

[47] [R. W. Anderson] to Geo. W. Mordecai, February 18, 1861, Cameron Papers.

[48] Hall "Address before the Legislature of North Carolina, February 13, 1861," in *Journal . . . of the Convention of the People of Georgia . . . 1861,* pp. 363-364.

[49] B. F. Moore to James W. Bryan, February 12, 1861, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill; John T. Moore to James W. Bryan, February 21, 1861, *ibid.*

[50] *Raleigh Register,* February 9, 1861. The election of delegates to the Virginia Convention occurred on February 4 and the convention convened on the fourteenth.

[51] C. C. Jones to Z. B. Vance, February 4, 1861, Vance Papers; Asa Biggs to L. O'B. Branch, February 5, 1861, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham.

satisfactory to the South would be accomplished by the Peace Conference. Clingman wrote that the only question to be decided was "whether we will aid Lincoln in making war on the South, or join the South in resisting the Black Republicans."[52] On the eve of the election, the Unionists circulated encouraging reports. A telegram of February 27 from J. M. Morehead, delegate to the Peace Conference, read: "The Peace Congress has adjourned. All is right. The Compromise adopted by them will be endorsed by the National Congress."[53] This and similar reports were sent out from the Union press offices in Raleigh and Greensboro on February 27 and 28.[54] The Peace Congress adjourned on the day before the election but the news of its failure was not generally known in the state until after the election.

The election resulted in the defeat of the convention by the vote of 47,323 to 46,672.[55] Of the one hundred and twenty delegates chosen, forty-two were secessionists, twenty-eight conditional Unionists, and fifty unconditional Unionists.[56] Of the eighty-six counties in the state, thirty elected secession del-

[52] *State Journal,* February 27, 1861.

[53] *Times,* March 2, 1861.

[54] The secession press charged that the *North Carolina Standard* circulated reports from John A. Gilmer and J. M. Morehead that the Peace Conference had reached a satisfactory settlement. *State Journal,* March 6, 1861. The Greensboro *Times,* March 2, 1861 (Union journal) admitted that Morehead's telegram had great influence in defeating the convention in that vicinity.

[55] *State Journal,* March 13, 1861; *North Carolina Standard,* March 20, 1861.

[56] The above analysis is the one arrived at by the present writer after checking both Union and secession newspapers and in so far as possible verifying the reports by the views of the delegates. The newpapers do not agree as to the exact number of each group elected and the official reports in the Legislative Papers are incomplete. The *North Carolina Standard,* March 20, 1861 (Union) gave the result as: Unionists 83, disunionists 37; the *State Journal,* March 13, and the *Wilmington Journal,* March 13 (secession papers) reported the result as follows: submissionists, 52; conditional submissionists, 22; and southern rights, 46. The Charlotte *Western Democrat,* March 12, 1861 (moderate secession paper) reported 76 Unionists, 41 secessionists, and 3 not known. S. A. Ashe, *History of North Carolina,* II, 566, R. D. W. Connor, *History of North Carolina,* II, 139-140, and J. G. deR. Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina,* p. 20, give the classification found in the *State Journal* and in the *Wilmington Journal.*

egates, thirty-five elected unconditional Union delegates, seventeen elected conditional Unionists, and four chose divided delegations.[57] Of the forty counties east of the western boundaries of Granville, Wake, Harnett, Cumberland, and Robeson counties, seventeen were secession, ten were unconditional Union, nine were conditional Union, and four were divided. Of the forty-six western counties, thirteen were secession, twenty-five were unconditional Union, and eight were conditional Union.

A comparison of the vote with the percentage of slaves in the counties reveals some interesting facts. Of the fifty-four counties in which slaves composed more than twenty-five per cent of the population, twenty-two were secession, eleven conditional Union, seventeen unconditional Union, and four divided. Of the fourteen counties in which over half the total population was slave, six were secession,[58] five conditional Union,[59] and two unconditional Union.[60] Of the thirty-two counties in which slaves formed less than twenty-five per cent of the total population, eighteen were unconditional Union, six conditional Union, and eight secession. Of the twelve counties having ten per cent or less slaves, eight were unconditional Union,[61] two were conditional Union,[62] and two were secession.[63] In other words, twenty-two of the thirty secession counties, six of the seventeen conditional Union counties, and seventeen of the thirty-five unconditional Union counties had a slave population of over twenty-five per cent. Consequently, the majority of the secession sentiment was in the slaveholding area. The slavery region, however, was almost equally divided on the question. A secession county was likely to be a slaveholding county, but a slaveholding county might not necessarily be a secession county. The large number of slaveholding counties which elected Union delegates can be explained by the Whig strength in those counties. Of the seventeen slavery counties which elected unconditional

[57] See Map III for a plotting of the results of the convention election.
[58] Edgecombe, Jones, Lenoir, Northampton, Richmond, and Warren.
[59] Anson, Caswell, Franklin, Greene, and Halifax.
[60] Bertie and Chowan. The delegation of Pitt was divided.
[61] Alleghany, Ashe, Alexander, Cherokee, Madison, Randolph, Watauga, and Wilkes.
[62] Macon and Yancey.
[63] Haywood and Jackson.

Union delegates, thirteen were carried by Bell in the election of 1860.[64]

Of the thirty secession counties, twenty-five were carried by Breckinridge in 1860, and only five by Bell. Of the fifty-two unconditional and conditional Union counties, thirty-seven were carried by Bell and twelve by Breckinridge.[65] It may be con-

[64] The other four were Wake, Robeson, and Rowan, carried by Breckinridge and Bladen, the returns from which were thrown out.

[65] Returns from Madison, Alleghany, and Bladen, all Union counties, were not recorded in the presidential election of 1860.

The question has often arisen as to what extent the vote in the presidential election of 1860 was a true indication of secession and Union sentiment in the state. The February convention election affords a means for such an analysis. Of the forty counties east of the western boundaries of Granville, Wake, Harnett, Cumberland, and Robeson, Breckinridge carried twenty-four. Of these fourteen were secessionist in the convention election of February, 1861, six were either conditional or unconditional Unionist, and four were divided. Of the fifteen eastern counties carried by Bell, twelve were either conditional or unconditional Unionist and only three were secessionist in 1861. Of the forty-six counties west of the western boundaries of Granville, Wake, Harnett, Cumberland, and Robeson, Breckinridge carried seventeen, eleven of which were secessionist in the convention election and six were Unionist. Of the twenty-seven carried by Bell, twenty-five were Unionist and only two were secessionist. Of the forty-one counties carried by Breckinridge, twelve were Unionist in 1861, whereas twenty-five were secessionist. Of the counties carried by Bell, thirty-seven were Unionist in 1861 and only five secessionist. Consequently, the conclusion is reached that the majority of Breckinridge's support came from those who were secessionists in 1861, although a considerable minority of his supporters were Unionists in 1861. The conclusion is inescapable that the vast majority of Bell's supporters were Unionists and only a very small minority were secessionists.

The above analysis, however, does not warrant the conclusion that the issue of Union or disunion determined the vote. Undoubtedly, many Democrats did not support Breckinridge because they believed him to be the candidate of the disunionists. Wm. S. Tayloe, Application for Pardon; R. S. Patterson to Col. T. W. Alspaugh, October 3, 1860, Patterson Collection, Raleigh. On this point, it is interesting to note that of the forty-two counties carried by Bell only eleven (Alamance, Buncombe, Craven, Chowan, Carteret, Forsyth, Gates, Henderson, McDowell, Orange, and Person) had been Democratic in the presidential election of 1856 and five of these had been Whig in the presidential election of 1852. Consequently, Bell carried only six counties (Alamance, Craven, Forsyth, Gates, McDowell, and Person) which were without doubt normally Democratic in the presidential elections. With the exception of Craven these counties were located in strong Union areas and elected Unionists in the February convention election. The only county carried by Breck-

cluded from the above that the great majority of secession sentiment was found among those who supported Breckinridge in 1860, and the majority of Union sentiment was drawn from those who supported Bell.

The results of the election were determined by several significant factors. The secessionists injured their cause by allowing the impression to become widespread that the purpose of the convention was to carry the state out of the Union. The leading advocates of the convention in the legislature openly urged the immediate secession of the state; this undoubtedly made the people suspicious of a convention. Moreover, the Unionists by making the issue "Union or disunion" put their opponents and the convention at a disadvantage.[66] The late adjournment of the legislature (February 25) was probably a handicap to the radicals, since the leading advocates of disunion and of a convention were members of the legislature. The burden was upon them to refute the charge that the convention was a disunion scheme and to convince the people that its purpose was the maintenance of the rights of North Carolina, in the Union if possible; out of the Union if not. In final analysis, the determining factor in the outcome was the hope of the people that the Peace Conference would effect some settlement of the difficulties.[67] The reports from Washington on the day before the

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inridge which had been Whig in the presidential contest of 1856 was Rowan and there he received a plurality of only three votes.

The foregoing analysis would seem to indicate that in 1860 in most cases people voted the regular party ticket. In a few counties in strong Union areas, Breckinridge failed to bring out the full party strength, and many Democrats remained away from the polls while others cast their votes for Bell, thus enabling him to carry those counties. It seems reasonable to conclude that in those counties, many Democrats did not support Breckinridge because they considered him a secession candidate. However, Breckinridge did not carry a single Whig county which was secessionist in the February convention election. It might be inferred from the above facts that Breckinridge lost the support of some Union Democrats but failed to gain any notable support from secession Whigs.

[66] W. J. Yates to L. O'B. Branch, February 26, 1861, L. O'B. Branch Papers, Durham. This letter contains an interesting criticism of the policy of the secessionists by a secessionist. *Western Democrat,* March 12, 1861.

[67] "Report of S. Hall to Georgia Convention," *Journal of the Convention of the People of Georgia . . . 1861,* p. 345. Hall said that the chief

election that the Peace Conference had arranged a settlement had considerable influence in the defeat of the convention. The Greensboro *Times* (Union) attributed the result primarily to the belief among the people that a compromise would be reached.[68] Nor must the fact be overlooked that many viewed the convention as a scheme to withdraw North Carolina from the Union.[69] In this connection, it is significant that twenty-eight of the thirty-five counties which elected unconditional Union delegates voted against the call of a convention, generally by large majorities. Of the seventeen conditional Union counties, ten favored a convention. In fact, with some exceptions, the sentiment for a convention was strongest among the secessionists and weakest among the Unionists. The convention was defeated chiefly by the tremendous vote cast against it in the strongly Union central counties, where the Unionists had warned the people that the convention was a disunion scheme.[70]

The Unionists received the results of the vote with great rejoicing.[71] The secessionists, on the other hand, were greatly disappointed, and many declared their intention of leaving the state rather than live under Republican rule.[72] The secession press did not accept the result as a final settlement of the issue. It expressed its determination to continue to urge the with-

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obstacle "to the immediate cooperation of North Carolina with the Confederate States was the belief entertained by the larger number of her citizens that the Peace Conference" would compose the dissensions between the sections.

[68] March 2, 1861. The *State Journal*, March 6, 13, 1861, declared that the false reports giving encouraging news defeated the convention. Henry R. Bryan wrote Col. J. J. Pettigrew, March 27, 1861, that the convention was voted down "through the agency of lying dispatches from Washington." Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

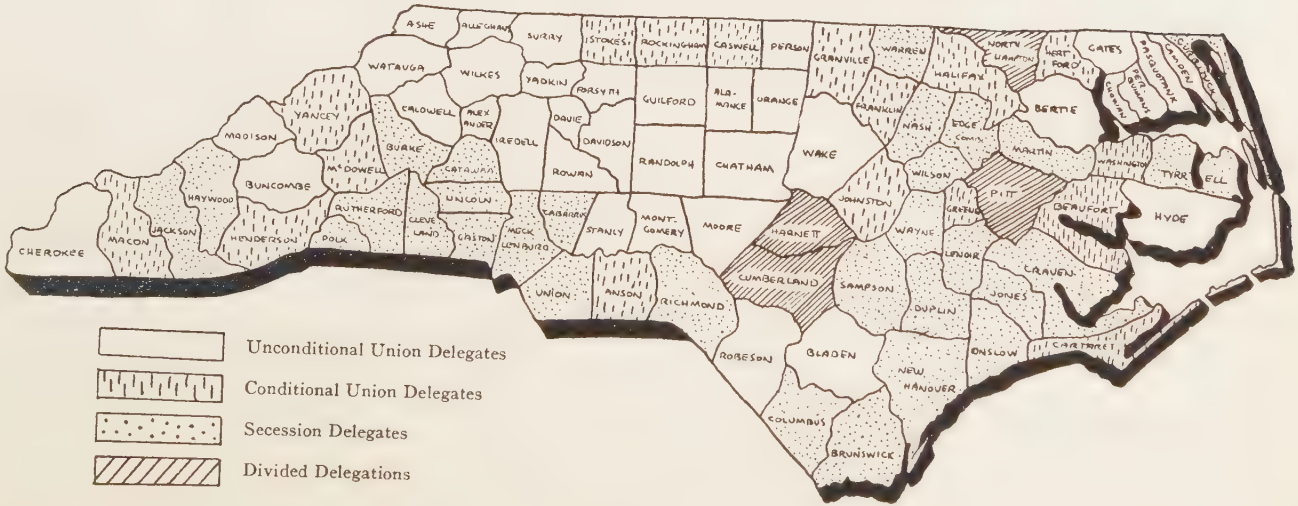
[69] Jonathan Worth wrote Dr. C. W. Woolen, May 17, 1861, "Everybody attributed to me a larger share of the credit or discredit of defeating the call of a Convention than to any other man in the State." J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Worth*, I, 147.

[70] *State Journal*, March 13, 1861; see footnote 36.

[71] *Ibid.*, March 6, 1861.

[72] R. R. Heath to Gov. Ellis, March 8, 1861, Governor's Papers 1861; Henry R. Bryan to Col. J. J. Pettigrew, March 27, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh; J. J. Foster to J. H. Brown, March 12, 1861, Person Papers; Emily W. Jeffreys to her nephew, March 23, 1861, William Jeffreys Papers.

MAP III. CONVENTION ELECTION, FEBRUARY 1861



drawal of North Carolina from the Union and to advocate her union with the Southern Confederacy.[73] The *Wilmington Journal* was confident that forthcoming events would force the people to change their opinion. "The seed is sown and events will develop and ripen their fruits with miraculous speed."[74]

[73] *Salisbury Banner,* March 5, 1861.
[74] *Wilmington Journal,* March 14, 1861.

CHAPTER XI

NORTH OR SOUTH?

While North Carolina was experiencing the excitement of the convention campaign, delegates from twenty-one states were in session at the Washington Peace Conference attempting to agree upon some plan of compromise. Although the secessionists did not expect the Peace Conference to accomplish anything,[1] the majority of the people of North Carolina sincerely hoped that it would effect a compromise.

The Peace Conference transmitted its recommendations to Congress, February 27. That body failed to adopt them. Of the seven recommendations proposed in the report of the Conference, only on the third and the fourth was the vote of the North Carolina delegates unanimous. Reid, Barringer, and Davis voted against all except those two, believing that the others "ought not to be and would not be satisfactory to North Carolina." Ruffin and Morehead thought it their duty not to reject any guarantees that the non-slaveholding states might offer and consequently voted for all of the recommendations.[2]

[1] John W. Ellis to I. W. Garrott, January 30, 1861, Ellis Papers.

[2] The seven proposals recommended by the Conference were as follows: 1. Slavery should be prohibited in all territory north of 36 degrees 30 minutes. South of that line slavery should not be altered where it existed, nor could a law be passed abridging the right of a citizen to take a slave into that territory. New states should be admitted with or without slavery as their constitutions provided. 2. No more territory should be acquired without a majority vote of the members of Congress from both slaveholding and non-slaveholding states. 3. Congress should not interfere with slavery in the states; nor abolish it in the District of Columbia without the consent of Maryland; nor interfere with the domestic slave trade; nor place a higher tax on slaves than on land. 4. The third paragraph of the second section of the fourth article of the Constitution should not be construed to prevent any state from aiding in the rendition of fugitive slaves. 5. Congress should prohibit forever the foreign slave trade. 6. The amendments to the Constitution so proposed should not be modified without the consent of all the states. 7. The United States

The plan adopted by the Peace Conference was severely criticized by the secessionists.[3] The *State Journal* declared "The bare offer of such terms is bitter and cruel mockery on the part of the North. We have asked bread and they have given us a stone—we have asked a fish and they have given us a serpent."[4] Only among the extremely conservative was there approval of the plan.[5] George Davis, a Unionist prior to the meeting of the Peace Conference, upon his return told the people of Wilmington that "No arrangement had been made—none would be made. The division must be made on the line of slavery. The South must go with the South . . . or as the tail-end and victim of a Free Soil North."[6] Ruffin, Barringer, and Reid were equally convinced that hopes of compromise were now ended.

The failure of the Peace Conference was tangible proof to many that North Carolina must choose between union with the North and union with the South. Hundreds who had looked to the Peace Conference for an adjustment of the difficulties now lost all hope of compromise.[7]

Lincoln's inaugural address reached North Carolina shortly after the report of the Peace Conference. The secessionists interpreted the message as indicating a policy of coercion which would result in war.[8] The *State Journal* concluded: "It is de-

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should provide compensation for slaves lost through the intimidation of officials. A detailed discussion of the Peace Conference can be found in D. L. Dumond, *Secession Movement,* Chap. XII. The vote of the North Carolina delegates is in *State Journal,* March 6, 1861, and in the Governor's Letter Book, 1861, pp. 384-385. See also John M. Morehead, Application for Pardon.

[3] R. R. Heath to Gov. Ellis, March 8, 1861, Governor's Papers, 1861; J. C. Newland to Gov. Ellis, March 13, 1861, *ibid.*

[4] March 6, 1861.

[5] B. F. Moore to Thomas Ruffin, March 7, 1861, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Ruffin Papers,* III, 138.

[6] *Wilmington Journal,* March 7, 1861.

[7] J. G. to Rufus Lenoir, March 11, 1861, Lenoir Papers. Applications for Pardon of Kimbraugh Jones, Paul C. Cameron, Thomas Jones, W. K. Lane, V. A. McBee, Mathias E. Manly, Thomas Ruffin, and George Davis. See also D. W. Siler's circular to the citizens of Macon County, March 4, 1861, Gash Papers.

[8] See press comments on the inaugural quoted in the *State Journal,* March 13, 20, 1861; *Wilmington Journal,* March 7, 1861. Lincoln took the position that no state could withdraw from an association of states without the consent of all. In addition, he expressed his intention to en-

ceptive. It coats with the semblance of peace and friendship what smells of gore and hate. It is, in short, such a declaration of sentiments as should and will bring every Southern man to his feet."[9] Although the most conservative Unionists did not regard the inaugural address as intending coercion,[10] the majority of the Unionists were greatly dissatisfied. It came as a bitter disappointment to the conservatives who had hoped for a message of assurance from the president.[11] The *North Carolina Whig*, a conditional Union journal, referred to it as a "Declaration of War" which could not "fail to excite a shudder in the most stoical bosom."[12] The *Raleigh Register* (Union) reluctantly concluded "that if the President carries out his avowed purpose, and attempts to collect the revenue, and to 'hold, occupy and possess property and places belonging to the government,' a bloody civil war will begin."[13] Although the conservative *Greensborough Patriot* and the Greensboro *Times* agreed with the address in its opposition to secession, they "decidedly opposed" coercion and thought that "a proper sense of existing circumstances might have dictated a more conciliatory spirit of forbearance."[14]

The effect of the address was to make secessionists of many conditional Unionists.[15] Rufus Barringer of Cabarrus, a former Unionist, said in a speech on March 6 that it was the purpose of the administration to place the border states "between the upper and nether millstone, and grind us to an impalpable powder" and that he now wished for the speedy withdrawal of North

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force the laws and collect the revenues in the seceded states. The implication of his remarks on the constitutional powers of the federal government was that in cases of doubt the will of a numerical majority should be the determining factor. For an excellent analysis of what Lincoln's address meant to the South, see D. L. Dumond, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-262.

[9] March 13, 1861.

[10] Geo. E. Badger to James W. Bryan, March 8, 1861, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill; *North Carolina Standard*, March 13, 1861.

[11] I. R. Siler to D. L. Swain, March 19, 1861, Walter Clark MSS.

[12] March 12, 1861.

[13] Quoted in the *State Journal*, March 13, 1861.

[14] *Ibid.*, March 13, 20, 1861.

[15] *Warrenton News* quoted in the *State Journal*, March 20, 1861; Fred Bryan to his sister, March 16, 1861, John H. Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.

Carolina from the Union.[16] T. Page Ricaud, an ardent Unionist from the western part of the state, wrote that "many, prominent, truehearted Union men" had become discouraged "and now there is an ominous silence, and I fear, every day's influence is strengthening the Secession ranks."[17]

In the weeks following the adjournment of the Peace Conference and the inauguration of Lincoln, the radicals continued their attempts to convert public opinion to an acceptance of the necessity of separation. The majority of the press in the state was now openly advocating secession.[18] The *Wilmington Journal* encouraged the members of the secession party to continue their work and put the facts before the people. "Stand to your guns," it urged. "Recruits are coming daily. . . . One more effort against Black Republican rule and the day is ours."[19] The radical press also emphasized the failure of the border states to gain any guarantees from the North. "What security on earth *have* we got," asked the *Wilmington Journal,* "now that, enfeebled, diminished, the fag-end of a hostile Confederacy, we stand most in need of some substantial guarantees? None on earth—not one—not a single one!"[20] The time for

[16] *State Journal,* March 20, 1861.

[17] T. Page Ricaud to Jones Fuller, March 13, 1861, Jones Fuller Papers.

[18] In March, the position of the newspapers of the state on the question of secession was as follows: for secession, Raleigh *State Journal, Wilmington Journal,* Fayetteville *Carolinian, Asheville News, Salisbury Banner,* Charlotte *Bulletin,* Charlotte *Western Democrat,* Goldsboro *Tribune,* Goldsboro *Rough Notes, Warrenton News,* Washington *Times,* Tarboro *Mercury,* Winston *Western Sentinel,* Wilson *Ledger,* Tarboro *Southerner,* and Hillsboro *Plaindealer,* all Democratic; the Wilmington *Herald,* Charlotte *North Carolina Whig,* Milton *Chronicle,* all Whig, and the *New Bern Progress,* Raleigh *Leisure Hour,* all independent. Against secession, the Raleigh *North Carolina Standard* and Raleigh *Ad Valorem Banner,* Democratic, and the following Whig papers: *Raleigh Register, Fayetteville Observer,* Salisbury *Carolina Watchman, Greensborough Patriot, Iredell Express,* Washington *Dispach,* Kinston *Advocate,* Salem *Press,* Wadesboro *North Carolina Argus,* and the *Hillsborough Recorder.* This list includes only those papers the position of which the present writer could determine. The list in J. G. deR. Hamilton, "Secession in North Carolina," pp. 36-37, contains several not included in the above list, but the position of which it has been impossible to verify.

[19] March 14, 1861; see also the *State Journal,* March 20, 1861.

[20] March 14, 1861.

secession had come, lamented the Charlotte *Western Democrat*, but unfortunately there was no convention to take action.[21]

Meanwhile, the leading secessionists were taking advantage of the failure of the Peace Conference and the unpopularity of the Lincoln administration to get their views before the people.[22] Speaking in Wilmington, March 5, Governor Ellis pointed to the failure of all efforts at compromise, the coercion policy of Lincoln's inaugural address, and "the inevitable course of things leading North Carolina to join her fate with her sisters of the South."[23] The Union press termed the speech "radical" and condemned it for advocating secession.[24]

Immediately after the defeat of the convention, the *Wilmington Journal* advised the people to demand that the governor call a special session of the legislature in order that a convention might be called.[25] Following the announcement of this policy, the radicals held meetings in various parts of the state at which secession speeches were made and resolutions advocating union with the Southern Confederacy were adopted.[26] On March 13, the Goldsboro *Rough Notes* invited representatives of the States' Rights party from all the counties to meet in Goldsboro on March 22 and 23 to "save your State from the clutches of the Abolitionists."[27] The secession press urged all the counties to send delegates,[28] and several county meetings were held at which delegates were elected.[29]

While the secessionists were holding meetings and organizing a party, the Unionists were noticeably inactive. Only a

[21] March 12, 1861.

[22] Wm. Badham, Jr., to Howell Cobb, March 6, 1861, U. B. Phillips, ed., *Toombs, Stevens, Cobb Correspondence*, pp. 547-548; see also letter of D. M. Barringer to the editor of the *Western Democrat*, *State Journal*, March 20, 1861.

[23] *State Journal*, March 13, 1861.

[24] *North Carolina Standard*, March 13, 1861.

[25] March 4, 1861.

[26] Report of a meeting in Charlotte, March 13, *North Carolina Whig*, March 19, 1861; Duplin County meeting, March 11, *North Carolina Standard*, March 20, 1861.

[27] Quoted in the *North Carolina Standard*, March 20, 1861.

[28] *State Journal*, March 20, 1861; *Wilmington Journal*, March 14, 1861.

[29] Report of a meeting held in Charlotte, March 16, *North Carolina Whig*, March 19, 1861; report of a meeting held in Wilson, March 16, *State Journal*, April 3, 1861.

comparatively few Union meetings were held and they were lacking in enthusiasm.[30] The failure of the Peace Conference and Lincoln's inaugural address had greatly weakened the position of the conservatives. Even such a zealous defender of the Union as Jonathan Worth feared "that revolution can't be stayed."[31] Chief among the few Union leaders engaged in stemming the current of secession were John A. Gilmer and R. P. Dick of Guilford, Dr. J. G. Ramsay and Nathaniel Boyden of Rowan, and H. W. Miller of Wake, who addressed the people and exhorted them to remain in the Union.[32] Among the press, the *North Carolina Standard,* the Salisbury *Carolina Watchman,* the *Raleigh Register,* and the *Greensborough Patriot* were the most active opponents of secession. Gilmer, in close touch with William H. Seward, Secretary of State, advised him to prevail upon the administration to adopt a policy which would strengthen the Unionists in the border states. He wrote that the radicals of the border states desired a collision of arms between federal and state forces in one of the seceded states; should such an event occur, he declared, the Union men would "be swept away in a torrent of madness." He urged the administration to withdraw the troops from the forts in the seceded states and thereby give encouragement to the Unionists.[33] The uncertainty of the policy of the Lincoln administration was not calculated to produce confidence in the federal government on the part of the border states and consequently the strength of the conservatives was constantly diminishing.[34]

On March 22 and 23, delegates from twenty-five counties assembled in Goldsboro for the first state convention of the Southern Rights or States' Rights party. Each county was allowed to send as many delegates as it desired. The neighboring

[30] *North Carolina Standard,* March 27, April 3, 1861.

[31] Jonathan Worth to his brother, March 16, 1861, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Worth,* I, 133.

[32] Applications for Pardon of John A. Gilmer and Dr. J. G. Ramsay.

[33] Gilmer to Seward, March 7, 8, 1861, F. L. Bancroft, *Seward,* pp. 545-546. The Charlotte *Bulletin* (secession) wrote: "One drop of Southern blood shed in defence of State Rights and State Sovereignty, will be the cause of uniting the people of the entire South." Quoted in the *State Journal,* March 20, 1861.

[34] Letters of Robt. P. Dick, John A. Gilmer, and H. W. Miller to Stephen A. Douglas quoted in G. F. Milton, *Eve of Conflict,* p. 556.

counties sent large delegations, from twenty-five to over a hundred each, but about one-half of the counties were represented by from one to three delegates each. Over one thousand persons attended the meeting. Among the leading members were such well-known political leaders as William S. Ashe of New Hanover, Burton Craige of Rowan, Thomas Ruffin of Wayne, V. C. Barringer of Cabarrus, Weldon N. Edwards of Warren, and D. K. McRae of Cumberland.

Weldon N. Edwards, venerable Democratic leader, was chosen president of the convention. In his speech to the convention, Edwards expressed the prevailing sentiment of the meeting. "To remain in this Black Republican Union," he said, " . . . [North Carolina's] position must be one of degradation and bankruptcy. . . . Seeking protection from her northern masters, she will receive insult and injury . . . I have but a few years left me, but so help me God, they shall be spent in the cause of the rights of the whole South." V. C. Barringer, Burton Craige, and D. K. McRae, among others, also delivered strong Southern Rights speeches. Franklin J. Moses, commissioner from South Carolina, and Edmund Ruffin, ardent Virginia secessionist, addressed the convention and urged the secession of North Carolina. They spoke of the similarity of interests of North Carolina and the states of the Southern Confederacy and invited North Carolina to join the people of the South "the most satisfied people in the world." The border states, they warned, could never gain security under abolition rule.

The committee on resolutions, of which Burton Craige was chairman, reported a set of resolutions which was adopted by the convention. The resolutions stated that the interests and honor of North Carolina demanded that it join its sister states of the South and recommended that an organization be set up to disseminate the facts on this issue to the people of every county, who, upon fully understanding these facts, would demand the call of a convention; that a State Executive Committee of two members from each congressional district be formed for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the Southern Rights party; and that Southern Rights organizations be set up in each county. A final resolution declared that any additional forces

placed in the United States forts in North Carolina would be regarded as a menace and would be resisted at all hazards. After the appointment of an executive committee, the convention adjourned to meet in Charlotte, May 20, the "birthday of independence."[35]

In the weeks following its organization, the newly organized Southern Rights party conducted an aggressive campaign in advocacy of the secession of North Carolina. Numerous meetings were held in slaveholding counties of the East and in the southwest. Most of them elected delegates to a grand rally of the Southern Rights party which, upon the request of citizens of Craven County, was to be held in New Bern, April 25 and 26, and which promised to approach the Goldsboro meeting in size and enthusiasm.[36] They also urged the governor to convene the legislature at an early date in order that a convention might be called. Meanwhile plans were being made for the Charlotte meeting, May 20.[37] At a Southern Rights meeting held in Raleigh, April 3, Senators Clingman and Bragg and Representative L. O'B. Branch urged the secession of North Carolina. All three speakers pointed out that there were other causes for apprehension besides slavery. The Morrill Tariff, the Pacific Railroad Bill, and the Homestead Bill were pointed to as measures which were inimical to the interests of the South.[38]

The radical press was aggressively advocating the separation of North Carolina. The people were asked to choose between the abolition North and people of the Southern Confederacy who were "waiting with open arms and willing hearts" to re-

[35] Proceedings appeared in the *State Journal*, March 27, 1861, *Wilmington Journal*, March 25, 1861, *North Carolina Standard*, March 27, April 3, 1861. When the train carrying some of the returning delegates stopped in Raleigh, March 24, an open fight between some of the delegates and citizens of Raleigh was only narrowly avoided. It appears that both secession delegates and Raleigh Unionists taunted each other and ridiculed the views of the other until both sides were ready "to fight it out." *North Carolina Standard*, April 3, 1861, *State Journal*, April 10, 1861.

[36] Henry R. Bryan to J. Johnston Pettigrew, March 27, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

[37] Reports of these meetings in the *State Journal*, April 3, 10, 17, 24, 1861, *Wilmington Journal*, April 4, 11, 18, 1861.

[38] *State Journal*, April 10, 1861. That was the first public speech in which Branch advocated secession.

ceive them. "Freemen of North Carolina," exclaimed the *North Carolina Whig,* "awake! arise! and throw off the yoke of the oppressor."[39] The Concord *Flag* was sure that, should a vote be taken now on the question of calling a convention, North Carolina would *"dissolve all and every connection now and forever* from the vile, rotten, infidelic, puritanic, negro-worshipping, negro-stealing, negro-equality and Yankee-Union."[40] The *Wilmington Journal* wrote that if Virginia was no longer "the Old Virginia of which her children had once so many reasons to be proud, let not North Carolina . . . be . . . her servile follower," but rather "assert her independence, take the lead" and Virginia would soon follow.[41]

The Unionists attempted to stem the secession tide, but with little success.[42] Lacking a definite program, forced to defend the Union on the basis of its past glories only, and unable to point to anything but an uncertain future for North Carolina in the Union, they were at a distinct disadvantage. Moreover, the uncertainty of Lincoln's policy toward the forts in the South played into the hands of their opponents and made the task of the conservatives doubly difficult.[43]

In the first few days of April, rumors were rife that Lincoln intended sending reenforcements to Fort Sumter.[44] Lincoln's announcement, April 8, that he was sending provisions to the garrison at Fort Sumter[45] occasioned speculations on the part of the secessionists as to his intentions. The *Wilmington Journal* announced that Lincoln had changed his policy in regard to Fort Sumter as a result of pressure from his party in the North.[46] The *State Journal* noted the rumor that Lincoln was

[39] April 9, 1861.
[40] Quoted in the *State Journal,* April 3, 1861.
[41] April 4, 1861.
[42] See reports of the few Union meetings in the *North Carolina Standard,* April 10, 17, 1861.
[43] Wm. A. Graham, Application for Pardon; W. J. Brown to J. Evans Brown, April 15, 1861, W. Vance Brown Collection.
[44] A. C. Evans to James W. Bryan, April 11, 1861, Bryan Papers, Chapel Hill.
[45] J. D. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln,* IV, 37.
[46] April 11, 1861.

preparing for war on the seceded states and declared that it had no doubt but that "some unlooked for scheme is being worked out."[47]

On April 12, the attack on Fort Sumter by the Confederate troops began and on the following evening the garrison surrendered. The thrilling accounts of the fall of Sumter were received by the North Carolina secessionists with enthusiastic demonstrations of approval.[48] In Wilmington, where the news created "the wildest excitement," guns were fired on the wharf and flags were hoisted on the principal streets.[49] Enthusiastic radicals greeted the accounts of the battle with such expressions as "glorious news—glorious news."[50] The Unionists, on the other hand, were greatly saddened.[51] B. F. Moore of Raleigh wrote his daughter: "Civil war can be glorious news to none but demons, or thoughtless fools, or maddened men."[52]

On April 15, President Lincoln issued his call for 75,000 troops to "coerce" the seceded states and Secretary of War Cameron called upon North Carolina to furnish two regiments. Immediately upon receipt of Cameron's telegram Governor Ellis replied:

> Your dispatch is received, and if genuine (which its extraordinary character leads me to doubt), I have to say in reply that I regard a levy of troops for the purpose of subjugating the states of the South, as in violation of the Constitution and a usurpation of power.
>
> I can be no party to this wicked violation of the laws of the country, and to this war upon the liberties of a free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina.[53]

On the same day, Ellis ordered Captain M. D. Croton to take possession of Fort Macon and Colonel John L. Cantwell to seize Forts Caswell and Johnson.[54] On the following day, the

[47] April 13, 1861.
[48] *State Journal*, April 17, 1861.
[49] *Wilmington Journal*, April 18, 1861.
[50] B. F. Moore to his daughter April 15, 1861, B. F. Moore Letters.
[51] Applications for Pardon of Wm. A. Graham and Kenneth Rayner.
[52] April 15, 1861, B. F. Moore Letters.
[53] Governor's Letter Book, p. 394.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 400. Officers had been in readiness to take possession of the forts since April 13. Capt. M. D. Croton to Col. Cantwell, April 13, 1861, John L. Cantwell Papers.

forts were seized.[55] On the seventeenth, an order was given for the seizure of the federal arsenal at Fayetteville; the arsenal was accordingly seized.[56] On the same day, the governor called the legislature to meet in special session, May 1.[57] This eventful day, April 17, also witnessed the secession of Virginia from the Union.[58]

The governor's refusal to comply with Lincoln's call for troops and his call for a special session of the legislature were generally approved by radicals and conservatives alike. Although opposed to secession, North Carolina Unionists were more opposed to coercion. The *Raleigh Register* declared it to be the duty of the legislature to call a convention which should immediately dissolve all connections between North Carolina and the former United States government.[59] The *North Carolina Standard* thought that the governor "acted with patriotic promptness" and that he would be "sustained by the whole people of the State." "United action in defence of the sovereignty of North Carolina, and of the rights of the South, becomes now the duty of all," it announced.[60] The secession press called upon the people to forget all past differences and to unite in defense of their country.[61]

The attack on Fort Sumter, Lincoln's call for troops, and the secession of Virginia almost instantly destroyed virtually all Union sentiment in North Carolina. A contemporary wrote, "All are unanimous. Even those who were loudest in denouncing Secession are now hottest & loudest the other way."[62] Even after the attack on Sumter, however, a few Unionists continued to oppose disunion. John A. Gilmer of Guilford wrote that the firing on Fort Sumter had not destroyed Union sentiment in

[55] Col. Cantwell to the Adj. General, April 17, 1861, John L. Cantwell Papers.

[56] Governor's Letter Book, p. 413.

[57] Governor's Letter Book, p. 395.

[58] H. T. Shanks, *Secession Movement in Virginia*, p. 204.

[59] April 24, 1861.

[60] April 24, 1861.

[61] *State Journal*, April 17, 1861.

[62] Chas. Manly to David L. Swain, April 22, 1861, Swain MSS. For the effect of the secession of Virginia upon North Carolina Unionists see Applications for Pardon of Wm. A. Graham, Thomas Martin, Charles Manly, George W. Mordecai, Kenneth Rayner, and Horace Palmer.

his section, but that Lincoln's proclamation had extinguished all hopes.[63] Some of the most ardent Unionists were instantly converted into disunionists. Jonathan Worth wrote that Lincoln "could have devised no scheme more effectual than the one he has pursued, to overthrow the friends of Union here. . . . I am left no other alternative but to fight for or against my section. I can not hesitate. Lincoln has made us a unit to resist until we repel our invaders or die."[64] Other leading Unionists including William A. Graham, Z. B. Vance, Henry W. Miller, Josiah Turner, and George E. Badger sadly turned their backs on the Union, for as Graham expressed it, "Blood is thicker than water."[65] A contemporary wrote, "This furor, this moral epidemic, swept over the country like a tempest, before which the entire population seemed to succumb."[66] The Greensboro *Times,* in urging North Carolina to join the South, wrote, "We loved the Union, but we love honor more."[67] The entire Union press and Union leaders in all sections were now openly espousing the cause of the South. Most pathetic of all in that momentous crisis were a few older Unionists who throughout their lifetime had been devotedly attached to the Union and who now,

[63] Gilmer to Seward, April 21, 1861, Bancroft, *op. cit.,* p. 549. Gilmer wrote that if he had thought the administration intended such a policy he "would have returned to Washington, and have gone daily on my knees to it . . . to avert that shedding of human bood which now seems inevitable. . . . All hope is now extinguished. The administration, *but doubtless inadvertently,* has done the very thing which the disunionists most desired." See also his Application for Pardon.

[64] Worth to Sprungs, Oak & Co., May 13, 1861, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Worth,* I, 143.

[65] *Hillsborough Recorder,* May 1, 1861; *North Carolina Standard,* April 24, May 15, 1861; *Raleigh Register,* May 10, 1861. One of the most graphic accounts of the effect of Lincoln's call for troops upon Union sentiment is that by Z. B. Vance: "I was addressing a large and excited crowd, large numbers of whom were armed, and literally had my arm extended upward in pleading for peace and the Union of our Fathers, when the telegraphic news was announced of the firing on Sumter and the President's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers. When my hand came down from that impassioned gesticulation, it fell slowly and sadly by the side of a secessionist. I immediately, with altered voice and manner, called upon the assembled multitude to volunteer, not to fight against, but for South Carolina." Vance, *The Political and Social South During the War;* also in Clement Dowd, *Life of Vance,* pp. 441-442.

[66] Kenneth Rayner, Application for Pardon.

[67] April 20, 1861.

pleading for its preservation, helplessly opposed the "irresistable current."[68]

Former Unionists and secessionists in all parts of the state enthusiastically urged resistance.[69] To the people of North Carolina, Lincoln had "become a perfect despot and the Northern people as fanatical and bloodthirsty as the Jacobins of the French Revolution."[70] A former Unionist wrote that "resistance is now on every man's lips and throbs in every bosom."[71] A traveler in the eastern part of the state wrote that he had never seen such enthusiasm; that "All along the road every man, woman, child and little negro seemed brim full of it: shouting, hurrahing, and waving secession flags met us everywhere."[72] Those who had formerly been the bitterest opponents of secession now urged the people of their counties to join in armed resistance.[73]

Meanwhile, before the legislature convened, the state was busy organizing in preparation for war. Governor Ellis appointed W. H. C. Whiting Inspector General in charge of the

[68] Thos. Macon to Jonathan Worth, May 6, 1861, Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Worth,* I, 138-139. Macon recounted his devotion to the Union during a long lifetime and appealed to Worth "to save the ship, save the ship, save the ship or let not the noble County of Randolph stain her hand in its loss." He stated that he had already been accused of being an abolitionist because of his opposition to secession. Finally, he denounced South Carolina for filling "the country with jealousy, war[,] armies, expenses, murder, rapine with all the horrors concomitant on war." It is impossible to say how many others held views similar to those of Macon. The overwhelming popular enthusiasm for separation probably prevented a few from expressing their opposition to separation. Yet, it is not likely that there were many who at the time favored remaining in the Union.

[69] *North Carolina Standard, State Journal,* and the *Wilmington Journal,* April 16-May 20, 1861; *North Carolina Whig,* April 23, 1861; *Asheville News,* April 25, 1861; see also Applications for Pardon.

[70] M. S. Speight to Fred. Speight, May 19, 1861, John H. Bryan Papers, Raleigh.

[71] W. N. H. Smith to Z. B. Vance, April 26, 1861, Z. B. Vance Papers.

[72] Frank M. Parker to his wife, April 27, 1861, Col. Frank M. Parker Letters; Patie Thompson to her brother, April 20, 1861, Lewis C. Thompson Papers.

[73] Speech of Josiah Turner, Jr., *Hillsborough Recorder,* April 24, 1861; Jonathan Worth to H. L. Myrover and Cyrus P. Mendenhall, May 6, 1861, J. G. deR. Hamilton, ed., *Correspondence of Jonathan Worth,* I, 140.

defences of North Carolina.[74] Military companies were rapidly organized in all parts of the state,[75] and telegrams from these companies offering their services poured into the governor's office.[76] A military encampment was established near Raleigh by the governor and the council of state, and before the legislature issued a regular call for troops five thousand volunteers had assembled there.[77]

On May 1, the legislature met in special session. Governor Ellis, in his message, reviewed the theory on which the government of the United States was founded and discussed fully the constitutional aspects of coercion. Assuming that the state would secede, he recommended a convention as the only legal method by which secession could be accomplished and advised that the action of the convention be unlimited and final. He urged adequate preparations for war and sufficient funds for arsenals and the manufacture of arms.[78] After authorizing the governor to tender military aid to Virginia,[79] the House speedily passed a bill calling a convention. Attempts to amend the bill so as to require the submission of the ordinances of the convention to the people failed, and the bill was passed unanimously.[80] On the same day, the bill passed the Senate with but three dissenting votes.[81] The act provided for the election of one hun-

[74] John W. Ellis to Wm. H. C. Whiting, April 21, 1861, John L. Cantwell Papers.

[75] *North Carolina Standard,* April 24, May 1, 1861.

[76] Ellis Papers, April-May, 1861.

[77] *North Carolina Standard,* May 1, 1861.

[78] Governor's Letter Book, p. 404 *et seq. House Journal,* 1st Ex. Sess., pp. 6-14.

[79] *House Journal,* 1st Ex. Sess., p. 15.

[80] *Ibid.,* p. 18. P. T. Henry of Bertie voted affirmatively but protested against the bill as "high-handed usurpation of power" for three reasons: 1. the length of time given the people before the election was inadequate; 2. the bill did not require that the action of the convention be submitted to the people for approval or rejection; 3. the action of the convention was not limited either as to time or power. *North Carolina Standard,* May 15, 1861.

[81] *Senate Journal,* 1st Ex. Sess., p. 19. Those who voted in the negative were L. I. Sharpe of Iredell, Wilkes and Alexander, Josiah Turner of Orange, and Jonathan Worth of Alamance and Randolph. They objected to the short time allowed for the canvass and the failure to require submission of the action of the convention to the people for approval. *State Journal,* May 8, 1861.

dred and twenty delegates, May 13, to an unrestricted convention to meet in Raleigh, May 20.[82]

The legislature then speedily enacted into law the other recommendations of the governor. By a vote of thanks which received only two negative votes, it expressed its approval of the governor's action in preparing for war.[83] After the passage of an act making it unlawful to administer to state officers the oath to support the Constitution of the United States,[84] the legislature proceeded to pass a series of measures to prepare the state for war. An act was passed appropriating $200,000 for the manufacture of arms at the Fayetteville arsenal.[85] The governor was authorized to appoint a commissioner to the government of the Confederate States.[86] Other acts authorized the governor to enroll ten thousand state troops,[87] to accept and arm twenty thousand twelve-months volunteers and to offer each a ten-dollar bounty,[88] to commission with a rank equal to their rank in the United States service officers who resigned from the army and navy of the United States to enter the service of the state.[89] Other acts provided for the appropriation of five million dollars for public defence,[90] declared the state absolved of all liability for any federal debt incurred after March 4, 1861,[91] defined treason against the state and provided for its punishment,[92] and provided a stay in the execution of judgments in civil suits.[93] An overwhelming majority favored the call of a convention and preparations for war. The unanimity of sentiment among the people was reflected in the almost unanimous approval which most of the measures received. After the passage of the foregoing legislation, the legislature adjourned, May 13.

In the brief campaign between the call of the convention and the election of delegates, there were no clearly defined parties.

[82] *Laws of North Carolina, First Extra Session, 1861,* Chap. 9.

[83] Josiah Turner and Alfred Dockery in the Senate opposed the resolution. *Senate Journal,* 1st Ex. Sess., 1861, p. 25; *Laws,* p. 111.

[84] *Laws,* Chap. 13.

[85] *Laws,* Chap. 1.

[86] *Laws,* p. 111.

[87] *Laws,* Chap. 6.

[88] *Laws,* Chap. 3.

[89] *Laws,* p. 110.

[90] *Laws,* Chap. 4.

[91] *Laws,* pp. 111-112.

[92] *Laws,* Chap. 18.

[93] *Laws,* Chap. 16.

The original secessionists[94] were united and active, whereas the former Unionists were divided and largely indifferent.[95] In some counties secessionists and former Unionists supported the same candidates, and there was little division of opinion.[96] In a few counties a heated contest occurred between former Unionists, now advocates of revolution, and the secessionists.[97] Only a few uncompromising opponents of secession actively opposed the convention and separation.[98] The vast majority of the people were in favor of separation, the only difference of opinion being on whether it should be accomplished by secession or revolution. Consequently, with the exception of a few counties, the election was without particular interest or excitement.

The convention which was chosen to dissolve the connections between North Carolina and the government of the United States met May 20. Composed of leaders from every walk of life, it was without doubt one of the ablest political bodies ever assembled in North Carolina. Among the more prominent members were George E. Badger, Thomas Ruffin, William A. Graham, Weldon N. Edwards, Asa Biggs, David S. Reid, Warren Winslow, Bedford Brown, W. W. Holden, Kenneth Rayner, R. P. Dick, Burton Craige, George Howard, John A. Gilmer, Henry M. Shaw, A. W. Venable, William S. Ashe, William Johnston, and Walter F. Leake.[99]

The members of the convention were divided into two parties on the issue of separation from the Union, the secessionists and the revolutionists. The first group was composed

[94] Those who had been secessionists in the February election.

[95] Rob. B. Gilliam to W. A. Graham, May 16, 1861, Wm. A. Graham Papers.

[96] This was true, for example, in Washington County, where W. S. Pettigrew, unsuccessful secession candidate in February, was unopposed. John Nichols to J. J. Pettigrew, May 8, 1861, Pettigrew Papers, Raleigh.

[97] This was true in Wake County, where W. W. Holden, K. P. Battle, and George E. Badger, former Unionists, were opposed by Thomas Bragg, Charles Manly, and George W. Mordecai, secessionists. The former were elected but by majorities greatly diminished from those of February. *State Journal*, May 18, 1861.

[98] Such as Tod R. Caldwell of Burke, Nathaniel Boyden of Rowan, and C. L. Harris of Rutherford. See their Applications for Pardon.

[99] See John Gilchrist McCormick, "Personnel of the Convention of 1861."

of the original secessionists and the former conditional Union Democrats who were firm believers in the theory of state sovereignty. The revolutionists were mainly former Union Whigs who denied the right of secession and who held that a separation could be accomplished only by a resort to revolution. The contest between these two groups was foreshadowed in the election of a president. Weldon N. Edwards of Warren, supported by the secessionists, was elected over William A. Graham of Orange who received the support of the revolutionists.[100]

Immediately after the election of a president, George E. Badger presented a paper for the consideration of the convention, the reading of which was postponed until the completion of the organization of the convention.[101] After the body had listened to an address of Franklin J. Moses of South Carolina, Badger's proposed ordinance was read. It was a resolution of separation based upon the right of revolution. It pointed to certain acts of Lincoln as unconstitutional and despotic and therefore justifying a resort to revolution.[102] Burton Craige of Rowan immediately offered a substitute resolution which Governor Ellis had asked him to introduce.[103] Craige's ordinance was a brief document; it repealed and abrogated the ordinance of 1789 by which North Carolina had ratified the Constitution

[100] *Journal of the Convention . . . of 1861,* p. 6. The vote was 65-48.

[101] *Ibid.,* p. 6.

[102] It is interesting to note that Josiah Turner wrote Wm. A. Graham, May 18, that a few of the secessionists would have an ordinance of secession all ready and that he hoped Graham would have a declaration of independence prepared. Wm. A. Graham Papers. After citing certain despotic acts of Lincoln, Badger's ordinance provided for the separation of North Carolina from the Union in the following manner: "Therefore, this Convention, now here assembled, in the name and with the sovereign power of the people of North Carolina, doth, for the reasons aforesaid, and others, and in order to preserve the undoubted rights and liberties of the said people, hereby declare all connection of government between this State and the United States of America dissolved and abrogated, and this State to be a free, sovereign and independent State, . . ." *Journal,* pp. 11-12.

[103] This ordinance was reputedly written by Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana and sent from Montgomery, Alabama, to Governor Ellis by James Hines, a North Carolinian. J. G. deR. Hamilton, "Secession in North Carolina," p. 43. Professor Hamilton's source for the above was the statement of John Nichols, printer of Raleigh, who was in Raleigh during the meeting of the convention.

of the United States and declared the union "between the state North Carolina and the other states, under the title of 'The United States of America'" dissolved.[104]

Thomas Ruffin's attempt to have a committee appointed to prepare an ordinance of separation was narrowly defeated. By a vote of 72-40, the convention then struck out Badger's ordinance.[105] Whereupon Ruffin offered an amendment to Craige's ordinance to omit the section repealing the ratification ordinance of 1789, but this was defeated by a vote of 49-66. The Craige ordinance was then unanimously adopted.[106] The adoption of the ordinance of secession made legal the separation which had existed in fact since Lincoln's proclamation calling for troops. The news of its adoption was received in the capital amid the booming of guns, the ringing of bells, and the shouts of an excited multitude.[107]

An analysis of the vote on the motion to strike out the Badger ordinance indicates quite clearly that the delegates opposing the motion represented strong Union Whig counties. Eighty-two counties were represented in the vote.[108] Of these,

[104] Craige's ordinance was entitled "An ordinance dissolving the Union between the State of North Carolina and the other States united with her under the compact of Government, entitled, 'The Constitution of the United States.'" It read as follows:

"We, the people of the State of North Carolina in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained, That the ordinance adopted by the State of North Carolina in the convention of 1789, whereby the Constitution of the United States was ratified and adopted; and also all acts and parts of acts of the General Assembly, ratifying and adopting amendments to the said Constitution, are hereby repealed, rescinded and abrogated.

"We do further declare and ordain, That the Union now subsisting between the State of North Carolina and the other States, under the title of 'The United States of America,' is hereby dissolved, and that the State of North Carolina is in full possession and exercise of all those rights of sovereignty which belong and appertain to a free and independent State." *Journal,* p. 13.

[105] *Journal,* pp. 13-14.

[106] *Ibid.,* pp. 14-16.

[107] *North Carolina Standard,* May 22, 1861. Years later, W. W. Holden wrote: "I remember well, that when the act of secession was consummated, the body looked like a sea partly in storm, partly calm, the secessionists shouting and throwing up their hats and rejoicing, the Conservatives sitting quietly, calm, and depressed." Boyd, ed., *Memoirs of Holden,* p. 17.

[108] Jones, Macon, Jackson, and Chowan were not recorded in the vote.

fifty-four favored striking out the Badger ordinance, twenty-four opposed striking out, and the delegates of four were divided.[109] Of the twenty-four counties opposed to striking out, twenty elected unconditional Union delegates in the February election, three elected conditional Union delegates, and only one elected a secession delegate.[110] Twenty-two of the twenty-four were Whig counties, and the other two were Democratic.[111] In general, these delegates represented counties where slaveholding was infrequent,[112] where the production of non-staple crops made slavery of little economic importance,[113] and where there was decided opposition to the institution of slavery.[114] Of the fifty-four counties whose delegates voted to strike out the Badger ordinance, thirty-nine were Democratic and fifteen were Whig.[115]

After the passage of the ordinance of secession, the convention unanimously adopted an ordinance ratifying the Provisional Constitution of the Confederate States.[116] A proposal by A. P. Dick that the question be submitted to the people was voted down.[117] On the following day the engrossed ordinance of secession was signed by the one hundred and twenty members of the convention.[118] With the issuance of President Davis' proclamation of May 21, North Carolina formally became a member

[109] The divided counties were Pitt, Northampton, Rowan, and Forsyth.

[110] The conditional Union counties were Carteret, Johnston, and Washington; Tyrrell was a secession county in February.

[111] The Democratic counties were Wake and Johnston. Each of the sixteen of the twenty-two Whig counties cast over sixty per cent of its vote for Bell in 1860.

[112] In Caldwell, Carteret, Cherokee, Davidson, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin slaves formed less than twenty-five per cent of the total population.

[113] Such as the extreme northeastern counties and the coastal counties of Hyde, Washington, and Tyrrell.

[114] Such as the counties of Chatham, Randolph, and Guilford in which the Quakers were very strong.

[115] Of the thirty-nine Democratic counties, Craven, Person, and McDowell were carried by Bell in 1860.

[116] *Journal*, p. 18.

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[118] Badger, who had left the convention upon the defeat of his ordinance, returned and asked to be recorded as voting, aye, at the same time adding "And I hereby repudiate all belief in any right of secession." *State Journal*, May 29, 1861.

of the Southern Confederacy. By that act it cast its lot against the Union which it had loved so well and from which it had been forced to withdraw.[119]

[119] It was not until June 6, 1861, that the convention unanimously ratified the permanent Constitution of the Confederacy. *Journal,* pp. 72-73.

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